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NEW STATESMAN

CHRISTMAS EXTRA:
NS editor was secret agent – exclusive
Stories by Paul Theroux and Martin Amis

Are you getting real Scotch?

How Labour keeps blacks out of Britain
US civil rights and the aftermath of Bakke
Edward Pygge's Christmas Quiz
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WITHOUT DOUBT, the most important story this year – for what it tells us about the way Britain is governed – has been the disclosure of how oil sanctions against Rhodesia were broken. So we make no apology for returning to the question, now that the government is committed to a Parliamentary Commission to look into the matter. Unfortunately this inquiry confirms some of our worst fears about the form of any investigation. It looks as though Mr Callaghan will hand pick the members, write the rules and then ask for parliamentary approval for this – in the House of Commons debate on 22 January. Nonetheless, this will be an opportunity to ask the questions that must be answered if we are to get to the bottom of the scandal. These main questions, and some subsidiary ones, are:

1. Why did it take so long to learn that British oil companies were busting sanctions?

It took fifteen months for the British government to discover, in February 1968, that Shell Mozambique – a British company – had illegally been handling oil supplies for Rhodesia; Even then, the news came from the oil companies. What were Britain's Consul-General in Lorenco Marques, the Mozambique capital, and the British intelligence agents in Southern Africa, doing all this time?

Why did British civil servants rely completely on the oil companies for their information? Jeremy Bray, a former junior minister at the Ministry of Power, had claimed that Angus Beckett, head of the petroleum division after UDI, was 'obviously in the pocket of the oil companies'. His assistant left the Ministry to join BP in 1970. And why did Dr Owen continue to believe the oil companies? As recently as this September he accepted Shell and BP's word that they were not operating a swap arrangement with Sasol to supply Rhodesia. These assurances were proved to be incorrect.

2. Did the civil servants withhold information from ministers?

Jeremy Bray believes they did. And in January 1967 Barry Powell, a Ministry of Power civil servant, received detailed statistical material on Shell supplies to Mozambique 'on a personal basis'. There was a similar occurrence in May 1968.

3. Why was Shell Mozambique not prosecuted for breaking the Sanctions Order?

The government knew in 1968 that Shell Mozambique, a British company, was supplying Rhodesia with oil and thus breaking the law. The DPP did nothing.

4. Was the oil swap with Total legal?

Shell and BP found a cunning way to get round the sanctions regulations by arranging to swap oil with the French company Total. In February 1969 George Thomson, now Lord Thomson, was told by the Foreign Office that this was 'legally sound'. But Shell themselves thought that this cosmetic operation was probably illegal, on the grounds that they knew the oil going to their South African companies would end up in Rhodesia.

5. Did the Prime Minister know what was going on?

Lord Thomson says that Sir Harold Wilson was kept informed about his meetings with the oil companies in 1968/69. But Wilson says the papers must have been hidden in the bumf the Foreign Office sent him. Even if this is so, why didn't Sir Harold ask why Smith had not been toppled within weeks rather than months?

6. Did Ministers mislead Parliament?

For instance, on March 1968 Lord Thomson told the House of Commons that there was one simple way in which sanctions could be tightened: if other UN countries supervised the activities of their firms as well as Britain. This remark came just one month *after* Thomson had been told that Shell Mozambique had been handling Rhodesia's oil supply.

Even more recently, on 2 May 1977, Lord Goronwy-Roberts said that 'assurances of a substantial character from the highest level have been given to us that no oil from British companies, including BP, finds its way directly or indirectly to Rhodesia'. But only two months *before* BP had confessed that they were doing just that to Sir Anthony Duff, deputy under-secretary responsible for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Incredibly, Goronwy-Roberts' assurance was given after the Bingham Inquiry had been set up; so presumably he was extra careful about what he said.

7. What were the dangers of confronting South Africa?

The oil companies succeeded in persuading the Foreign Office that enforcing sanctions legislation would lead to the nationalisation of British oil interests in South Africa. This would have been patent nonsense if the United States and France had co-operated with Britain. There is clear evidence that the South Africans were worried about too close an association with sanctions busting in case, as their Secretary for Commerce put it, 'this could turn the full spotlight of international wrath against South Africa.'

8. Has the government lost control over BP?

It owns the majority of shares, remember. It has two directors on the board to look after the public interest. Yet, with the exception of Tom Jackson, they appear to have shown no interest in the sanctions busting operation. Lord Greenhill, an ex-head of the Foreign Office and a former government emissary to Rhodesia, seems to have been particularly lax.

These questions, if investigated thoroughly and answered truthfully, will tell us a lot about how Britain is governed today, who is doing it and in whose interest. The democratic and open control of our rulers is, perhaps, the most pressing political problem in our society. MPs could do this cause a great service by asking these questions; and ministers, civil servants and businessmen could do it a greater one by answering them truthfully. Let that be their New Year's resolution.

NOTES

OPEC reasserts its power

A correspondent writes from Abu Dhabi: The rises in oil prices decided by the Organisation of Petroeum Exporting Countries in Abu Dhabi this week are an unholy compromise between moderation and opportunistic expediency. An initial increase of 5 per cent in January seems moderate enough but that is only a prelude to the compounding of smaller increases quarter by quarter to a total of 14½ per cent by the end of the year. The average over the full 12 months comes out at just under 10 per cent. No tears need to be shed for the Western World in facing such a rise. In Britain the price of petrol in real terms has fallen to the level it was before OPEC grabbed its economic power five years ago (and of course it has North Sea oil) and the US still needs to be brought to its senses over energy usage. Since 1973 its imports of oil have risen by 200 m. tonnes a year to 360 m. tonnes and it is now importing more oil than it produces. The US needs all the incentives it can get, if not to reduce its imports then at least cut back their seemingly inexorable rise. OPEC is being slightly disingenuous when it says that the moderation it has employed with these increases after two years of freeze should, in the words of Shaik Ali Khalifa Al Sabah, the retiring president, double the incentives of the West to solve their economic problems. OPEC is doing what it thinks the market will stand.

But if the cap fits, and it does, the US should wear it. The rises that OPEC is introducing are partially to compensate for the decline in the dollar. The OPEC member countries knew it would be impossible to get full compensation for the losses from both the devaluation of the dollar and inflation over the past couple of years. Its economic committee recommended that a range of between 24 and 40 per cent would have been necessary to bring revenues back to the levels of early 1977. Such prices would have driven the world back into recession. But the fact is that the dollar is under pressure because of the level of US oil imports. Cut the imports and the dollar would strengthen. The world would have a few more years' oil supply and OPEC would not need to threaten to compensate fully for its currency and inflation losses in future if the West failed to solve its economic problems.

More troubling is the fact that it is the rise in oil prices since 1973 and the consequent world recession which have been largely responsible for the plight the developing world is in today, unable to service their astronomical debt or get a price for their raw materials which would create much needed growth. Shaik Yamani, the influential Saudi Arabian oil Minister, wanted only a 5 per cent increase for the year. His first consideration was the effects any increase would have on the Third World. The sentiment was nobly expressed but the fact is that the speed with which the new and complicated increases were accepted shows that the fight was fairly perfunctory. In OPEC as elsewhere self-interest proves a powerful force. The problems of Iran have put the market price of crude at least temporarily higher than the new prices introduced by OPEC. The opportunity for an official rise was there and it was taken, but the problems of a growing shortage of oil from 1985 onwards remain. So far it has been the poor nations who have suffered more than any other. The North-South dialogue has not been a great success. OPEC is still

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pushing the idea of a commodity buffer stock fund but that would not necessarily help the poorest nations. Solutions are not easy, but OPEC must beware proving as greedy economic masters as the multinational oil companies were, before it assumed much of their role. Hopes that OPEC would become the means of a major redistribution of world wealth are shrinking steadily.

European Parliament stakes its claim

John Palmer writes from Brussels: The European Parliament, the Common Market Commission and the nine EEC governments in the Brussels Council of Ministers are heading for political and possible legal clashes which will pose some awkward questions for the British Labour Party in general and its anti-marketeers in particular. The line-up will be a confusing one for those who see EEC politics in terms of a simple divide between the goodies (defenders of national sovereignty and proponents of a drastic reform of the EEC) and the baddies (Euro-federalists and defenders of the EEC status quo).

The European Parliament – or the 'Assembly' as it is better known in UK parlance – has never been a body calculated to inspire respect for its democratic fervour. Consisting for the most part of pensioned-off Euro-veterans and sentimental Evangelists for European unity, the European MPs have been referred to as 'A bunch of frightened rabbits, afraid of national governments and even of their own shadow'. That was always unfair. A handful of members, prominent among them UK anti-marketeers such as John Prescott and Mark Hughes, have tried to give the committees of the Parliament investigative teeth (to the ill-concealed irritation of both the Commission and the Council of Ministers on occasions). But attempts to inject a modicum of life into the somnolent proceedings of the Assembly proper was even beyond the more lively Euro-members.

However, last week the Parliament upped suddenly and issued a challenge to the powers that be among the nine which sent Brussels, Luxembourg and points in between into constitutional turmoil. Seizing hold of an unusual loophole in the procedures by which the annual EEC budget is fixed after consultations between Parliament and the Ministers, the Assembly adopted a budget which was accepted by the Commission but was promptly denounced as 'Unconstitutional' by the West German, French and most other EEC governments. The Parliament had offended by increasing the Regional Fund far beyond the traditional limits laid down for its freedom to amend council proposals.

Now the Regional Fund is one of the principal instruments by which the present grotesque injustices in the distribution of EEC payments and benefits among member states can be improved. That is why this year the British and the Italians, just before the Brussels summit, voted to prevent the Parliament's proposed increases being rejected by EEC budget ministers – thus creating the loophole which the Assembly meeting in Luxembourg was quick to exploit. The British Government is caught in an awkward dilemma. On the one hand it has deplored the tendency, modest in all faith, of the Budget to encroach on the Council's preserves and acquire for itself potential new powers. In this it has the backing of anti-marketeers. On the other hand the Parliament by defying the West Germans and French on regional spending is striking a blow for budget reform which could set an interesting precedent. What if the Parliament were to refuse to endorse the EEC budget as a whole unless the monstrous Common Agricultural Policy was brought under control?

The scope for British (and other) anti-market members, elected for the first time next June, to wreak havoc from within could be greater than anyone imagined. But it would mean the British Left having to abandon its unseemly infatuation with 'British Sovereignty' and other such nationalist sentiments best left to Enoch Powell and the Right. It would also mean the Left taking a less parochially defensive attitude to a possible future overlap of the powers of the European Assembly and Westminster, but it could provide the beginnings of a strategy of challenging the reactionary assumptions of EEC policy where it matters – from within.

Scotland Yard and the return of the bombers

Duncan Campbell writes: Until the weekend's wave of bombings, the thankfully underemployed Anti-Terrorist Squad at Scotland Yard had been using its time profitably by preparing some media weapons. A key item may be a film, *A Time Of Terror*, which would be shown during the early phases of a major campaign. Scotland Yard would be keen to have the film shown on television to encourage vigilance against bombs and the need to provide assistance to police.

The currently available script of the film contains elements of Churchillian rhetoric and civil defence 'we're in it together' camaraderie. Some of this is disturbing in the approach taken to promote public safety. 'Are you sure you are not living next door to terrorists?' viewers may be asked. In the past, terrorists have been unearthed from ordinary suburban terraces, but yet more 'exist dormant throughout suburban London'. Fortunately or unfortunately, 'terrorists fail to appreciate that the British people under attack will stand united'.

Viewers may then be given a somewhat sketchy profile for terrorist spotting: 'young . . . keep to themselves . . . women often act as couriers . . . like to live near underground . . . may not work regularly . . . often visit pubs but don't drink excessively . . . pay for goods in cash'. The film remarks that many more innocents than terrorists would be caught by such a net, but proposes no remedy for the problem that these innocents might suffer simply through conforming to the police model of a standard terrorist.

Such open official encouragement to distrust and inform on neighbours has always been the symbol of an unhealthy society. Nor is it likely that a river of undiscriminating gossip and suspicion will well serve public safety through the early detection of bombers, though it may well be welcomed by the blossoming police intelligence gatherers.

Keep children out of social dustbins

Children under the age of seventeen cannot be sentenced to imprisonment in this country. Yet in 1977 3,841 school boys and 231 school girls were incarcerated. Most were sent to remand centres but many – 100 boys and 102 girls – found themselves in local adult prisons.

Even more disturbing is the fact that a large proportion of these children had not been convicted of an offence and had been sent to prison because the courts had certified that they were too unruly to be safely put in the care of the local authorities. One thousand and thirty-one of the 3,841 boys held on remand in prisons in 1977 were given non-custodial sentences and a further thirty-seven were found not guilty. Of the 231 girls, a staggering 147 were given non-custodial sentences and a further three were found not guilty. And all of them had spent a considerable time in prison.

Almost everyone agrees that it is wrong to put children into prison. Indeed, it is not possible to sentence children of this age to prison when found guilty of an offence. Paradoxically, however, they can be made to serve a prison sentence on remand while they are still technically and often in fact, innocent. It is indeed a strange and indefensible situation. On the one hand we say: 'We do not imprison children in this country; We have something called the Children and Young Persons' Act, and we think in terms of care and welfare rather than punishment.' On the other hand we imprison children through a back-door method, as an administrative convenience.

Admittedly, the Government is committed to ending the remand of all schoolchildren to prison. In 1977 it legislated to end the remand of girls under fifteen on unruly certificates and tightened up the criteria on which unruly certificates for both boys and girls could be granted by the courts. It is now legislating to end the remand of all schoolchildren under seventeen to prison on unruly certificates.

Yet girls under seventeen can still be sent to remand centres and prisons if they are awaiting trial or removal to borstal. And it is still possible for girls to be imprisoned at Holloway even though they may eventually be found not guilty or given a non-custodial sentence. The position of schoolboys remains untouched. Many thousands of fourteen to sixteen year old boys will continue to be consigned to remand centres and adult prisons simply because they have been defined as 'unruly'.

Why? We have not been prepared to make a reality of the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act and provide sufficient resources for the building of community homes. Successive governments have found it easier to use prisons as social dustbins, at a cost of £112 per week. The sad fact is that we let them do it.

Robert Kilroy-Silk

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The first national journalists' strike

Patrick Wintour writes: This month after imposing sanctions for a fortnight, the NUJ with great trepidation undertook their first national strike. The union want £20 on their provincial members' pay and an hour off their working day. Some executive members were worried that literally thousands of the union's 9,000 provincial journalists would abandon the union if a strike was called. They argued that it was improbable that a strike would have any effect on the Newspaper Society, the provincial newspapers' employers' organisation and that the only outcome would be the financial destruction of the union. The plunge was nevertheless taken by the executive by 12 votes to 11. With the basic weekly rate for a qualified journalist on a small weekly paper standing at only £60 and the uncompromising newspaper owners recording profit increases this year of up to 40 per cent, it was very difficult to do otherwise. Originally shielded by the argument that to pay more than 5 per cent would incur government sanctions, the NS were able to accept in principle that provincial journalists were badly paid, that too many of them were leaving the profession and that the NS should go cap in hand to the Department of Employment and argue for a special case. With pay sanctions abandoned last week the NS's main line of defence has been blown out of the water. They were now free to pay the journalists. Quickly inventing a new obstacle to a settlement, the NS now say there must be a full return to work before negotiations can begin.

The unity of the strike so far has proved the doubters on this NUJ executive wrong. Having finally gathered some industrial muscle the union do not intend to relent now. With the help of the NGA, Natsopa and especially the TGWU, the journalists' pickets have managed to close over 100 papers, particularly the weeklies. Of the papers that remain their flow of copy from the Press Association where half the journalists are on strike has been reduced to 20,000 words a day. Altogether, the NUJ calculate the NS has lost £1.5m. in revenue. Already the Scottish and Irish weekly proprietors have made offers up to 19 per cent compared with the NS's 8.9 per cent proposed. Individual employers inside NS are now breaking ranks and making more generous offers as well. The luckier journalists intend to stay out in support of those entirely dependent on the national minimum wage agreement. The real setback of the strike – and this affects all trade unions - is the success of Express newspapers in obtaining an injunction ordering the union to lift their instruction to Express journalists that copy from the Press Association should not be handled. Mr Justice Lawson's decision last Friday comes as part of long line of court decisions undermining the effect of the 1974-76 industrial relation legislation and particularly the immunity of trade disputes from the law.

The thoughts of Wastemoreland

Martin Walker writes: President Richard Nixon's 'favourite General', William Westmoreland, was in London last week *en route* for the Battle of the Bulge reunion with British, American and *Wehrmacht* officers. He found time for a board meeting (he is a director of Alladin Ltd) and an inspiring address to the American Chamber of Commerce at the Savoy Hotel. 'Much the way Ancient Rome declined and fell . . . America's moral fibre began to weaken in the late 1960s . . . The Western World is being afflicted by the same plague of dissension and apathy . . .' etc.

After his speech, the former chief of US Land Forces in Vietnam gave an impromptu post-prandial press conference, at which he was asked if Vietnam had ever been military winnable. He replied: 'The Tet offensive was misrepresented to the American people by the media. It was the last despairing attack by the defeated North Vietnamese, a parallel to Hitler's Battle of the Bulge counter-offensive. We inflicted a severe military defeat on the VC, and if we had followed up, it would have been downhill all the way. I had a plan for that, a plan I had been working on from 1965. We were ready to go. The plan was for us to invade the sanctuaries in Cambodia, Laos, to mine Haiphong harbour, and then launch an amphibious hook north of the De-Militarised Zone'. He was asked 'This would amount to a full-scale land invasion of North Vietnam?' He replied: 'Right. I wanted only another 200,000 men. With the Tet offensive he had come into the open to the point where it would justify a major onslaught by us. He had exposed himself for the first time – and we could have won the war within a year. My plans had the full support of my deputy and successor, General Creighton Abrams.' He was asked: 'So the plan was stopped by Washington?' 'Washington changed its mind on us', he replied. 'The American people were ready to go, but the false assessment given by the media impacted on the authorities in Washington, so politically and psychologically, they were not in a position to make the counter-stroke, the amphibious hook north of the DMZ. It was a failure of will'.

POLITICS
Anna Coote

Fine words and foul practice: Labour's record on immigration

Keeping blacks out of Britain

THIS YEAR MERLYN REES got his first big chance to play the good guy in the immigration debate. It was an offer he couldn't refuse. The villains had all been cast and the script written before he arrived on the scene. On 30 January Margaret Thatcher told ITV audiences what she thought of an estimate that four million people 'of the New Commonwealth and Pakistan' would be living in Britain by the end of the century. 'It means that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture' said the leader of the Conservative party; the British character had done so much for democracy, for law 'and throughout the world' that any fear of its being swamped could make people 'rather hostile to those coming in. So if you want good race relations you have got to allay people's fears on numbers'.

Thatcher's speech had no foundation in fact, but it made racist approach to immigration more respectable than ever before. And that respectable image was strengthened on 21 March when a House of Commons Select Committee published its First Report on Immigration.

The five Labour and five Tory MPs on the Select Committee had been inquiring into 'the assumptions made by the government about potential immigration and matters related thereto'. Rather than reviewing the injustices of the immigration rules or the overall effect of entry into Britain by foreign and Commonwealth citizens, the Committee homed in relentlessly on what one member, Dudley Smith, referred to as 'the number of black people that we are really concerned with – immigrants in that sense'.

The Committee recommended, among other things, that a quota be set annually for admission from the Indian sub-continent; that in future children born abroad to men settled in the UK should be refused entry after the age of 12; that immigrants admitted on work permits should no longer have a right to settle after four years; and that the government should think about setting up a system of 'internal control' (which would mean, presumably, obliging immigrants to register with the police or carry identification cards).

Last year 381,313 Commonwealth citizens were admitted from Australia and New Zealand. Of those, 3,828 were accepted for settlement. A further 19,584 were allowed to stay for a full year, most of whom were free to seek employment, with a reasonable prospect of staying on when the 12-month period expired. *Less than half as many* Commonwealth citizens were admitted from India and Bangladesh (162,584); 6,685 were accepted for settlement, but only another 1,122 were allowed in for a full year and very few of those were free to look for jobs. Among foreign nationals, more than five and a quarter million Europeans were admitted under EEC rules permitting them to stay as long as they are working or looking for work. By contrast, 70,537 Pakistanis were admitted, of whom only 10,947 were allowed to settle; most of the remainder were admitted on visits of less than a year and forbidden to seek employment.

The recommendations were unanimous, though they might have been drafted at Conservative Central Office. Indeed, they bore a striking resemblance to William Whitelaw's speech on 7 April, when he laid down the official Tory line. Whitelaw called for a compulsory register of wives and dependants waiting to enter Britain from the Indian subcontinent; an annual immigration quota; no right to settlement for work permit holders; and an end to admission of husbands and fiancés of women settled in the UK.

AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND it would have been hard to the Home Secretary to take up any position without appearing to occupy vaguely liberal ground. In July he produced a White Paper on immigration which condemned the worst features of the Select Committee Report and the Tory proposals. An annual quota could be 'particularly harsh'; a dependants' register would be 'discriminatory'; an inquiry to consider a system of internal control would be 'objectionable in principle'; and the exclusion of teenage children would be 'unthinkable'.

The White Paper was described by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants as 'one

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of the biggest slaps in the face ever administered to a Select Committee'. Thereafter, the subject disappeared abruptly from the news. The Home Secretary rode off into the sunset in his new white stetson. And Labour's achievements in the field of immigration fell conveniently into the shadows.

Not until this month has there been any concerted attempt to set the record straight. Now, three documents published by the Action Group on Immigration and Nationality* provide a sharp reminder that in four years of government Labour has operated a profoundly racist and increasingly unjust immigration policy. While Merlyn Rees was taking a principled stand against the Select Committee, he was allowing business to continue very much as usual.

In his White Paper, Rees makes no attempt to reform current practice or to shift the debate on to rational ground. Instead, he boasts of the increasing numbers of immigrants expelled from Britain: 'Measures to combat overstaying are pursued vigorously and given a high priority'; prosecutions, convictions, removals and deportations have 'more than doubled between 1973 and 1977'. The government's commitment to act firmly is reflected, we are assured, 'in the sharp rise in the numbers of illegal entrants removed over recent years (from 139 in 1974 to 485 in 1977)'.

WHAT LIES BEHIND Rees's boast can only be described as a covert system of repatriation. A series of judgements in the Divisional Court and Court of Appeal have so eroded the rights of certain immigrants that they are now subject to summary arrest, unlimited detention without trial and deportation – even though they have been settled here for some years.

The Immigration Act gives the Home Office powers to deal with immigrants believed to have entered by deception (by means of forged passports or false statements, for instance): under Section 26, they can be arrested with a warrant, prosecuted in court and, if found guilty, deported. But the Home Office has by-passed this section of the law and makes use, instead, of Section 2, which gives it summary powers to detain and 'remove' illegal entrants without affording them any of the civil liberties which suspects are supposed to enjoy. Section 2 was originally intended for those caught in the act of illegal entry – coming ashore in a small boat, for example, or presenting false documents at Heathrow – but the wording is ambiguous. The Courts have upheld the Home Office's interpretation that it can be applied to individuals who are merely *suspected* of having entered by deception at some time in the past.

Suspects have no right to bail. Their only hope of obtaining justice through the courts is to apply for a writ of *habeas corpus*. But the courts have managed to wash their hands of that too – by maintaining that the burden of proof lies not with the Home Office to show that the individuals they have arrested are guilty, but with the suspects to prove themselves innocent.

Unwelcome immigrants at Harmondsworth Detention Centre, from BBC News, 31 August 1978

The numbers of arrests of alleged illegal entrants have reached scandalous proportions. In the first six months of this year, 512 immigrants were detained – some for considerable periods (see Table), and some on the flimsiest of grounds. One 19-year-old was held for three months in Ashford remand centre on threat of being sent back to Bangladesh, because the Home Office suspected he had entered by deception when he first came to Britain with his father *at the age of 12*. A young Sikh was locked up because he got married and failed to tell the authorities. His mother had first applied for him to enter in 1972 when he was 16, but the application failed and they had to appeal. He was eventually admitted in 1975. By that time he had a wife and when he reached Britain he applied for her to join him. The Home Office promptly arrested him, claiming he had entered by deception because he had not told them he was a married man. He had no idea he was supposed to have done so.

THOSE TWO YOUNG MEN were lucky: they were released and allowed to stay. About 50 per cent of immigrants arrested in this fashion are 'removed' to their country of origin. They can appeal against the decision, but not until they are out of the country. Their appeals are heard in Britain, in their absence. The government was kind enough to grant an 'amnesty' to those who had entered illegally before 1 January 1973, but this has been severely limited. Two brothers, both illegal entrants who were settled in Britain at the date of the amnesty, were detained by the Home Office. One was released and allowed to stay; the other is still in prison, destined for deportation. He was unlucky enough to have taken a holiday abroad: the amnesty doesn't apply to those who have left and re-entered since 1973. It is due to end altogether next week.

There is no question of the Home Secretary using his powers against white and black indiscriminately. Solicitors who specialise in immigration cases respond with hollow laughter when asked if Australians or Europeans are pursued by police with as much vigour as Bengalis or Ghanaians. Among 102 alleged illegal entrants detained on 19 April this year, not one appears to be of Anglo-Saxon descent – as the Table shows.

THE PLIGHT OF RELATIVES queuing in the Indian sub-continent has been relieved – but only marginally. In 1976 a 'priority queue' was formed. To qualify, the wife of a man settled in the UK should be in the first year of her first marriage and the first wife of her husband, or she must have children (by the husband) under 10 years of age. *Her* waiting time has been reduced, but those in the 'main settlement queue' (second wives and those with children over 10; husbands and fiancés of women settled in the UK) are no better off than before.

In Bangladesh, where conditions are worst, women with children over 10 can expect to wait 21 months for a first interview with entry clearance officers. If there are no hitches, they may be allowed to start their journey straight after the interview, but large numbers of applications are referred to Britain for checking – and that means more delays, usually of a year or more. Most applicants come from the district of Sylhet which means they have to travel 250 miles, then wait at the High Commission in Dacca several days while the

Illegal Entrants detained in prison on 19 April 1978

Country	Number
Algeria	1
Bangladesh	12
China	1
Cyprus	1
Ghana	6
India	28
Iran	1
Mali	1
Mauritius	1
Mexico	1
Nigeria	11
Pakistan	30
Turkey	5
Stateless	3
Total	**102**

Of these, 54 had been detained for one month or less; 22, for two months or less; 14, for three months or less; six, for four months or less; and six for more than four months, the longest period being almost 11 months.

Written answer by Rt Hon Merlyn Rees MP to Mr Hoyle MP, *Hansard*, 4 May 1978, p 216.

*Immigration control: how it works, *a briefing, 10p or £1 for 20;* Immigration: how the truth got swamped *by Ann Dummett, a critique of the Select Committee Report and Conservative Party proposals, 20p;* Immigration: Where the debate goes wrong *by Michael Dummett, 40p. From Action Group on Immigration and Nationality (AGIN), c/o JCWI, 44 Theobalds Road, London WC1.*

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interviews take place. They are questioned closely for evidence of 'fraud'. Children of 12 and over are cross-examined separately and families have been turned away because of minor discrepancies between their answers.

Children are physically examined and X-rayed to check that their ages tally with those of the children named on their documents (although child development experts in Britain are doubtful about the methods used and maintain that X-rays cannot establish a person's exact age). Women are also examined for signs that they might be too young to be the real mothers of the children they claim as their own. Treatment of this kind is meted out as a matter of course, not just in exceptional cases. Yet entry clearance officers are supposed to apply the test of civil, not criminal, law and decide whether applicants are eligible to enter 'on the balance of probabilities', rather than 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Similar conditions prevail at other posts on the sub-continent. At Dacca and Islamabad, applications are refused or 'deferred for further inquiries' at a particularly high rate. Last year, in three months, Dacca processed 5,003 applications, refused 2,414 and deferred 1,507; in another three-month period, Islamabad processed 4,725, refused 1,003 and deferred 1,356. Research by the Runnymede Trust has shown that out of 58 cases where dependants in Pakistan were refused entry clearance and lost their appeals, 55 were miscarriages of justice.

ANOTHER SCANDAL of Labour's immigration policy is the long queue of UK passport holders waiting in India for permission to enter under the 'special voucher' system. This was launched in 1972 to deal with the 'problem' of East African Asians. In 1975 Callaghan announced that 5,000 vouchers would be availabe each year and the total was divided between different countries, according to the proportions of applicants expected. By far the largest quota went to East Africa, but this was still too small to meet demand. Many who were queueing there found life intolerable and went to India to await their turn. As a result, the voucher queue in East Africa declined dramatically, while the one in India grew. But the government has refused to increase India's tiny quota of 500 vouchers a year. In 1977 only 2,032 entered Britain with special vouchers – nearly 3,000 short of the total available.

In Britain immigrants are asked with increasing frequency to produce passports when they come into contact with police. Foreign-born husbands are put on 'trial' for the first year of their marriage; police visit their homes, scrutinise their living arrangements and question them and their wives – all in order that the Home Office may reassure itself that the relationship is genuine and not a 'marriage of convenience'. Again, it is men entering from the Indian sub-continent and other non-whites who come in for the most severe scrutiny – not Canadians or New Zealanders.

WHEN THE WHITE régimes in Southern Africa collapse and Britain finds itself 'opening the floodgates' to white Rhodesians and South Africans, it is unlikely that they will be left queuing in a hostile environment for 'special vouchers' to ensure that they do not 'swamp' our culture. It is unlikely that their children will be X-rayed to check they are the age they claim to be. It is unlikely, when they have settled in Britain, that they will be told to produce their passports when they ask a policeman for directions in the street. It is unlikely that they will be imprisoned without trial for months on end because the Home Office suspects they have entered by deception.

Whichever party wins the next election, there is little hope of a new non-racist immigration policy. All Labour will do, it seems, is to make matters worse more slowly than the Tories. As is so often the case, the rank and file of the Labour party have quite a different approach from the government. The Human Rights Sub-Committee and the Race Relations Study Group have submitted a draft policy statement to Merlyn Rees. It is a mild enough document, but it does seem genuinely intent on ending the racialist aspects of current policy and practice. It calls for the repeal of existing powers to remove illegal entrants; for no deportation without a prior right of appeal; for no detention under the Immigration Act except where there is strong reason to believe the individual will abscond; for the Immigration Rules to be made justiciable; and for a swift issue of vouchers to admit within two years all UK passport holders waiting to enter Britain in East Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

Rees's reply was not encouraging. He did not see the need to make the Immigration Rules more justiciable than they already were: 'Ministerial discretion is not a bad thing

EDUCATION — **Rick Rogers**

When will they stop beating handicapped children?

Would you beat a handicapped child? That's the question MP Bruce Grocott will ask when he moves his private member's bill on 19 January. For Grocott aims to outlaw corporal punishment in the country's community homes and special schools. Unfortunately it won't be easy.

There is little information about the extent of caning handicapped and deprived children. Neither the DES (for special schools) nor the DHSS (for community homes) keeps such statistics. Both are too busy. Few local authorities, who are directly responsible for disciplinary measures in both sorts of institution, are at all open about corporal punishment. But it is allowed, and it does go on.

Local authorities are legally bound to have an annual review of all disciplinary methods in community homes. Some don't. Even when they do, the wrong decision sometimes gets made. For example, Nottinghamshire county council recently re-introduced corporal punishment in its schools. It has just produced statistics for the first year of beatings. Between November 1977 and 1978, the cane was used ten times in two of its six community homes. Eight of those beatings took place in one home. Six of those eight were for smoking; two were girls.

Ten beatings in a year may not seem a very high rate. But it raises some pertinent questions: why does only one home of the six find it necessary to use the cane regularly? Why is it used mostly for smoking – hardly a reason for a beating? Smoking can damage your health but so – according to every piece of research that's ever been done on the subject – can corporal punishment. There's even a study to show that rather than deterring child smokers, the use of the cane actually increases their consumption of cigarettes.

Incidentally, the caning of girls was abolished in workhouses in 1842, and in industrial and reformatory schools (predecessors of approved schools and community homes) over a hundred years ago.

The same pattern emerged in Croydon when it was revealed last year that one 11 to 14 mixed Junior High School used the cane on an average 1.2 times a day in the school year. Yet the school to which these apparently troublesome pupils transferred at 14 had abolished the cane some ten years previously. So who needs the cane most, the pupil or the teacher?

These figures highlight the thread of inconsistency which runs through the whole pro-beating lobby. Teachers claim it is needed as a last resort, but the evidence shows that the last resort comes at the end of a very short line. Studies show it is no real deterrent. Every other country in Europe (apart from Ireland) has abolished it – without the consequent chaos in schools which teacher unions claim will happen here. Even local authorities have widely differing sets of regulations and safeguards about caning.

All this has been well documented in the newly published *Abolition Handbook* (STOPP, 90p from 10 Lennox Gardens, Croydon). It's a timely publication. With the European Court of Human Rights coming out against birching on the Isle of Man, the legal net is tightening around the pro-beating lobby.

However, Grocott's bill – modest as it is – may not pull that net any tighter. There is still a powerful lobby to ensure its failure. At its head are the teacher unions, firmly opposed to any curtailment of their right to beat children. According to Education Secretary Shirley Williams they are now the only real stumbling block to carrying out the long overdue reform of complete abolition from all schools. Both Education and Health ministers want an end to caning. A DHSS letter to local authorities last August reiterated David Ennals's view that corporal punishment in community homes did not create the right environment and that there should be no need for it – 'neither desirable nor proper'. On 12 December, Margaret Jackson repeated in the Commons the education ministerial line: 'I am opposed to the use of corporal punishment and hope to see its disappearance from all maintained schools in this country'.

But it is unlikely that anything will be done with an election so near. It remains a contentious issue which stirs up all manner of irrational fears and responses – certainly too messy for pre-election periods. The issue would really only be tackled politically at the beginning of a Labour government's term of office.

Grocott too wants to see an end to caning in *all* schools as soon as possible. But he feels that given the difficulties – political and emotional – which lie in the path of complete abolition, it is still useful to deal with the most glaring anomalies first. Even his piecemeal bill won't affect special units attached to ordinary schools. He knows too that someone has only to shout 'Object' for the bill to fall. So he has worded the bill to make it very hard for someone to object without appearing monstrous. Hence, for example, the title – the Handicapped and Deprived Children (Abolition of Corporal Punishment) Bill. Unfortunately, that shouldn't deter some MPs who grace the Commons.

The recent Protection of Children bill which sought to protect children from being used in pornographic photographs – in which canes and whips often appear – generated a good deal of parliamentary support. Ironically, a bill to stop adults actually beating children (even handicapped and deprived ones) stands much less chance of getting through.

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if it is exercised – as Parliament can ensure – *with good sense and flexibility whatever party* is in power'. As for issuing more vouchers, that could not be done. There were still 33,000 UK passport holders in East Africa; true, most of them hadn't applied for vouchers because they wanted to stay, but who could tell when they might change their minds? 'The commitment in Africa cannot therefore be ended' (i.e. by transferring vouchers to India) 'without setting a closing date for the voucher scheme.'

Attached to his letter are 'draft speakers notes' for election candidates which set out Labour's policy in these terms.

> It will honour existing commitments to the dependants.
> It believes there is no need to introduce quotas for dependants when numbers are falling.
> It opposes in principle internal controls based on everyone having to carry an identification card and produce it on demand.
> It will not introduce a register of dependants on the ground set out in the report of the independent Parliamentary Group chaired by Lord Franks, *ie a register would be discriminatory*, incomplete, take a long time to come into force, and be very expensive without giving certainty about future numbers.

But a Labour government will not, apparently, stop playing the black numbers game with Margaret Thatcher, nor stop police harrassing black immigrants, nor humanise its entry clearance procedure in the Indian subcontinent, nor cease its arbitrary repatriation scheme.

For all Rees's fine words this summer, he still fears the racist vote and hasn't the courage to fight it. While the two major parties maintain their unholy alliance, there is truly a danger of our culture being swamped – not by black immigrants, but by institutionalised racism.

UNEMPLOYMENT
Terence O'Brien

A first-hand account from the executive dole queue

'We're a commercial enterprise'

There were 30 of us, 28 men and two women. The potted biographies we'd had to give displayed a panorama of qualifications and experience which were either too commonplace or just too good for today's industry. Twelve years in petro-chemicals, ten years in computers, a shipping broker, ex-regular officers with diplomas in management, engineers, marketing and human resources managers, and some who had left Africa for political reasons; and they all looked like high level executives who had school fees and golf clubs to support. Thirty people who had been invited to a seminar which would show how right they'd been to register with PER when they had suddenly found themselves unemployed.

The chairman seemed proud to have such a range of talent facing him round the huge table and said that he assumed that we all knew that PER meant Professional and Executive Register, and that it wasn't in business to fix people up in a job. He paused, and the faces around him showed that they might have had the opposite impression. He took a blank registration form from the pile of papers in front of Betty, the aide on his right. He flourished the form and described in detail how it should be filled in: people didn't seem to realise he said, that the computer could only take in certain information. We all tried to look as if that was the way we had filled our forms in. His staff and particularly Peter, the aide on his left, introduced as a Recruitment Consultant, had to edit nearly every form to make it suitable for the computer, and he looked serious as he said, with the confidence of a man who was competing successfully with Marks and Spencer, that PER was a commercial enterprise. PER charged employers for its services and he wanted us to know that all his colleagues were professionals. He mentioned that quite often during the course of the morning.

PER he said, knew about every job. They had a list that high, and he held his hand about a foot above the table: 'Isn't that so Betty?' Betty nodded. This list was called 'CODOT', and lowering his hand six inches and his voice for confidentiality he said: 'But *this* was the height of the list called 'PERDOT.' Deeming it unnecessary to give the meaning of these strange titles he went on to say that the whole of 'PERDOT' is in the computer, waiting to be matched with the registration forms.

A chemical engineer asked what happens when they're matched because he hadn't heard anything for six months. 'Ah,' the chairman said, and gave the man a kindly look as he told him he was jumping the gun, matching was only one process; some short-listing was needed. An African mining man asked truculently who did the short-listing – the employer? The chairman laughed at this and said of course not, Peter did it, the Recruitment Consultant; there could be thousands with the same qualification. But not with the same experience, the mining man persisted. Of course, but nobody could assume an employer was looking for wide experience unless he asked for it, after all, Peter could only deal with computerised factors, and we must not overlook the fact that the 'salary expected' information we'd given could be an important factor. So the short-list is made up of young graduates willing to work for under £4,000? The chairman smiled and said in a sort of understanding voice that it could be difficult over forty, but this was a good time to break for coffee, and we did.

Professional and Executive Recruitment is the government's employment agency for the higher paid. It is part of the Manpower Services Commission. If has two tasks: advising professional and managerial people on how to get a job and acting as an employment agency. Its first service costs job-seekers nothing and is financed by a government grant – £2,700,000 last year. As an employment agency it charges fees to employers: income last year was £3,250,000. Overall the PER just breaks even. It has over 500 employees, 36 offices and claims to be responsible for two fifths of the jobs found through recruitment agencies.

Right, he said when we resumed, he wanted to talk about applying for posts in the *Daily Telegraph* and other papers. Cut it out, he said, cut the advert out and sleep on it: always write a letter the following day. If you get an application form, sleep on it; read it carefully before filling it in. It was amazing the number of people who wrote 'Charlie Brown' when it clearly asked for surname first, and he looked at us as if we were listening to him because we hadn't put surnames first.

Letters inviting us to interviews should be slept on; try ringing the telephonist of the firm to find out how many had been invited: telephonists rarely ask awkward questions and most important, when we get there, DO NOT talk to anyone in the waiting room, they could be 'plants'. After telling us sternly that suits should look smart and shoes polished he said it was wrong to take a briefcase to an interview, and he was surprised at the seminar's reaction: the first reaction of the morning.

A marketing manager and a land buyer were quite definite that a briefcase showed that one was used to being an executive, others said but where would one keep relevant papers? Others agreed with the chairman because they wanted to or were used to leadership. After an earnest discussion involving at least eight of us the chairman said he wasn't telling us not to take a briefcase, nor was he saying we should, and he looked relieved when someone used to committee work said it was a good idea to take notes at an interview. The chairman smiled and shook his head sadly like Kojak: 'No way,' he said, 'no way, it will put a prospective employer right off'. This was too much for the ex-regular officers with diplomas in management who cited two-hour interviews where they'd taken prolific notes. An argument raged for nearly four minutes.

Although we were supposed to go on until one o'clock the chairman decided to wind the seminar up at 12.50, having forgotten perhaps what he had planned to do that would have lasted until one o'clock: he may of course, have realised that thirty people who thought they were going to be shown some short cuts into employment, but weren't, make a difficult discussion group. He went rapidly on to tell us about two courses, the 'Presentation Course', three days learning from a top man in industry about how to take advantage of an interview, and a fortnight's 'Career Development Course'. This latter he said, had specialists to help us, even, and he smiled as if we knew what he was smiling at, even a psychologist.

He made a pile of the numerous pamphlets on the table before him and pushed them across to Betty, urging us to remember that PER was not in business to fix people up in a job and we should market ourselves as a package. There were dozens of differently priced shampoos he said, but they were all detergent. PER Consultants were in most towns and we could treat them with candour and confidence because they were professionals. The seminar was over.

In the car park a group of my erstwhile colleagues were discussing their case histories before motoring back to their telephones and adverts. Over-qualified was what most of them thought was their problem, and they were all aware of the difference in status between what you were and what you are. Dignified all of them; abused by the iniquities of the rat-race but desperate to return to it. It seemed an unnecessary burden to be told they couldn't take briefcases, and notes, and to have to sleep on adverts and applications and letters inviting them to an interview.

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REFUGEES
Margaret Van Hattem

The Vietnamese boat people:

A test for humanitarian principles

Any country which accepted responsibility for the Vietnamese boat people might well end up with a million or more homeless on their hands. Although that prospect is enough to make the world's strongest governments twitch and trip over their humanitarian principles, time is short to tidy up the mess of displaced people left behind by the wars in Indochina. Earlier this month, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva called together the governments most concerned with the problem of Indochinese refugees. The Thais, Malaysians and Vietnamese were there as the countries of first asylum; together with the US, France, Australia, Canada, Japan, Britain, Germany and other western countries who accept or, it is felt, ought to accept, refugees on a permanent basis. They were presented with some fairly unnerving statistics.

Since 1975, when Saigon became Ho Chi Minh City, more than 450,000 people have fled from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The figure includes 150,000 Cambodians who have crossed into Vietnam, close on 100,000 Vietnamese who have taken to the seas in small boats, and around 200,000 (mainly Laotians, with around 20,000 Cambodians and 2,000 or so Vietnamese) who have crossed into Thailand. Of this 450,000, around 200,000 are still homeless, including 140,000 in overcrowded refugee camps in Thailand and 50,000 in camps in Malaysia. The problem, unfortunately, does not stop there. Refugees continue to stream overland into Thailand at the rate of around 5,500 a month, and to leave at the rate of less than 2,000 a month. With the boat people, the disparity is bigger and growing rapidly. Until about six months ago, monthly arrivals averaged around 2,000. Some made it as far as Australia or Japan, but by far the greatest number landed in Malaysia. In April, the number passed 5,000. In October, more than 12,500 arrived and last month, more than 21,500 – 19,000 of them in Malaysia alone. The outflow – to the US, France, Canada and Australia – continues at a steady 2,000 or so a month. The rapid growth over the past two months, when the hazards of the approaching monsoon were expected to bring a decline in numbers, has confounded all attempts at planning. It is tentatively estimated that the present 200,000 homeless will have grown to 350,000 by this time next year. This could, like all previous estimates, turn out to be wildly short of the mark. Since 80 per cent or more of the boat people are of Chinese origin, some of the more pragmatic forecasters are trying to assess the size of Vietnam's remaining Chinese population. They assume that almost all will try to leave unless Hanoi abandons what appears to be a fairly concerted effort to push the Chinese out. But trying to get reliable statistics out of Vietnam is, for obvious reasons, a hopeless business and the latest Western estimates of the Chinese population – mostly between a million and 1.5 million – are not particularly reliable.

The governments who met in Geneva are understandably reluctant to make open-ended commitments before they know what they are in for. So they opted for what is politely known as a 'holding solution'. That is, they agreed that between them they would increase their *annual* intake of refugees by 3,580 – less than a quarter the number of new arrivals for the *month* of November – to a total of 82,250. They also promised to donate something – under $30 m. for 1978 and 1979, less than the UNHCR has spent this year alone. This is not going to solve many problems and no one was particularly impressed. The Malaysians went so far as to suggest it was 'grossly inadequate'. But it looks like being the only positive action to be taken at international level for at least six months to come. However, the Thai and Malaysian governments say the strains are already insupportable and that they cannot accept more refugees without firm guarantees of their being accepted elsewhere. It was perhaps fortunate for the 2,500 or so crammed aboard the freighter Hai Hong – refused permission to land in Malaysia last month – that the international press was on the spot reporting the visit of a Chinese dignitary. Otherwise, they would probably have been forced back to sea to take their chances, instead of being airlifted to Canada, France, Germany and Belgium. Those whose boats survive the monsoon storms of the next few months may not be so lucky.

It is not yet clear how many more people will have to drown in order to force governments around the world out of their present inertia. Nor is it clear what sort of action they might be forced into: this is one of the things worrying the non-communist South East Asian governments, who would, no doubt, prefer to see Indochina weak and divided (evidence of a Soviet military build-up in Vietnam was possibly the most important factor behind the strengthening of the Association of South East Asian Nations in 1976) but not so weak and divided as to draw the superpowers back into the region in force. On the other hand, the presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees – many of them skilled, educated and not lacking in money or initiative – in the increasingly squalid and overcrowded camps, makes for a potentially explosive situation that no government can be expected to tolerate, let alone governments as strained as those of Thailand and Malaysia.

For Malaysia, the problem has unpleasant racial overtones. The country suffers from tensions between its economically dominant Chinese population and the numerically and politically dominant Malays. Since the violent racial riots of 1969, the Government in Kuala Lumpur has embarked on a programme to give Malays greater opportunities in business, government administration and education, to a point where the Chinese minority is now at a serious disadvantage. This in turn is aggravating the endemic problem of communist insurgency as resentful and unemployed Chinese turn to the ineradicable communist presence on the Thai-Malaysian border. The predominantly Chinese boat people, whatever their private feelings about communist regimes, cannot hope to be absorbed into Malaysia under the present government.

The tidiest way of disposing of the problem would be to persuade the Vietnamese to tighten their border controls and stem the outflow. Hints were dropped in Geneva and the Vietnamese were quick to point out that massive infusions of foreign capital might alleviate the economic hardships that encourage the Chinese to leave. But no western government seems prepared to comply, (though some appear ready to step up international aid through, for example, the World Bank, if the Vietnamese go a little softer on the Chinese) nor, in the wake of the Helsinki Agreement, does the West care to be seen advocating restrictions on the free movement of Vietnamese citizens. As an alternative, the Malaysians have proposed that the refugees be sent to an island somewhere in the region, where the 'international community' could set up a 'processing centre' pending a more permanent solution. The trouble with this suggestion is that no one appears prepared to donate an island – partly, no doubt, for fear of being saddled with the problem while the international community finds its identity.

There is little to suggest that all the Laotians in Thailand want to leave south east Asia; some hope that they may, one day, be able to return to Laos. But for the Vietnamese boat people, it is generally accepted that the only solution lies in permanent resettlement, and that there are limits to the absorptive capacity of other South East Asian countries. It follows that North America, Western Europe and Australasia will have to open their doors a little wider. Unfortunately, they all have lots of good reasons for not doing so. The US administration, which accepted 175,000 Vietnamese following the 1975 withdrawal of US forces from Indochina, and which recently doubled its 1978/79 intake to 51,000, says Congress cannot be expected to approve further increases while the rest of the world lags so far behind. Besides, it claims, with domestic unemployment problems and much jostling for places by refugees from Comecon countries and Latin America, it can do only so much for the Indochinese. The Americans do not talk of collective guilt, but they have a great deal to say on the subject of international responsibility.

The French, who have so far accepted more than 32,000 refugees, prefer to keep their plans to themselves. The Australians, who have taken in 15,000 and are committed to accepting a further 10,500 annually, say that with a national population of less than 15 million they cannot absorb refugees any faster. The Japanese are prepared to donate money but have over-population problems. The Dutch fear trouble over racial integration. The Swedes, who supported Hanoi during the Vietnam war, have ideological difficulties. The British are prepared to accept those rescued by UK ships, but dare not risk a hostile public reaction to yet another influx of third world refugees. The Germans have unemployment problems.

Jonathan Swift, had he attended the Geneva meeting, might have been moved to propose, modestly, that the Vietnamese boat people be issued with sextants and charts showing the way to Guyana. As it happens, the British government did suggest that the Vietnamese authorities be encouraged to ensure that their boats are more seaworthy.

Margaret van Hattem is the Brussels correspondent of the Financial Times.

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Are you getting real Scotch?

BRUCE PAGE on the detection of authentic Scotch, and the risks of Japanese imitation

IN THE RUN-UP to this year's Christmas liquor season William Teacher & Sons – one of the few 'independent' whisky blenders still working on a significant scale – put into effect a most eccentric marketing decision. Generally, advertising for food and drink relies on vague fantasy rather than concrete information: in whisky ads, this tendency proceeds to absurd and even degrading lengths. We are presented with vast pictures of hairy, kilted men engaging in Victorian combat: this, by exploiting the military charisma of the Scottish regiments, intends to persuade us that some mediocre drinking-fluid, generated just recently by commercial expediency out of industrial distillation, is – did we but know it – part of the warp and woof of our rough island story. Whisky advertising, in short, follows for the most part in the grand tradition of that arch-phoney 'Johnny Walker' – whose claim to have been 'born in 1820' will be analysed below, and turns out to be roughly as authentic as Harold Wilson's statement that he used to go barefoot to school. Amid the mist of hucksters' gobbleddyhook, Teacher's this year distinguished themselves by producing an advertisement which makes, in effect, a *specific statement:*

> Teacher's contains more malt than other popular blends.

Admittedly, there is scope here for a little weaselling. Just how *un*popular would a whisky have to be before Teacher's would decline to compete against it? All the same, by the standards that apply in most booze advertising, this is a gloriously refreshing change, like discovering an honest citizen in the Cities of the Plain. To judge by the chemical investigations we have conducted (see illustration) Teacher's claim appears to be reasonably well-grounded. The results, indeed, are in some cases unequivocal: compared to a big-selling supermarket whisky like MacArthur's, Teacher's contains a lot more malt and a lot less grain.

So, anyone laying in a supply of Teacher's against the long Christmas siege can feel that the money has gone on a fairly honest product. But there are a good many questions which remain. Teacher's, when asked for a little detail, reveal a rather modest stance: their product, they say, is roughly half malt whisky and half grain spirit. Is not this in itself something of a comedown since the immediate post-war era, when one of the principal historians of the business, Ross Wilson[1], was able to estimate that even the mass-market blends produced by the giant Distillers Company (DCL) contained roughly 60 per cent malt? A rather different question may be asked by people less familiar with the liquor business: does the difference between malt whisky and grain whisky matter? And if it does, why have people only just started to publicise the difference?

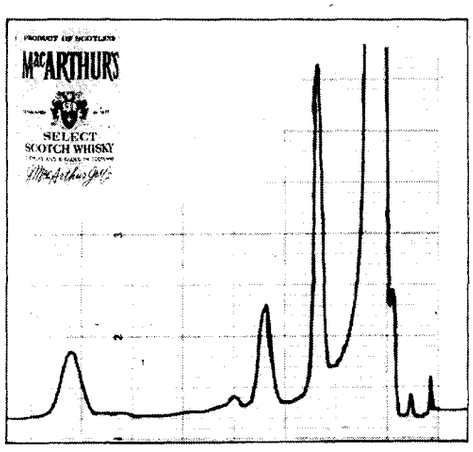
The short answer is that Teacher's new marketing line represents a rational, if belated response to a crisis which threatens the whole Scotch whisky industry – a crisis of identity, brought on by commercial pressures which have for many years now tended towards the degradation of a unique natural product – malt whisky – by greater and greater adulteration with grain spirit, an industrial artefact. Praiseworthy as Teacher's new stance may be, it will require more than the determination of an individual firm to rescue Scotch from its impending doom. Over the years, British governments have shown great reluctance to take any responsibility for preserving honesty and individuality in the liquors that are offered to the people – exhibiting a childlike faith in the natural purity of the market-place which would seem inconceivable to French or German administrators. The truth is that it will take official regulation to save Scotch whisky, and later in this article some simple suggestions will be made as to how the business might be affected.

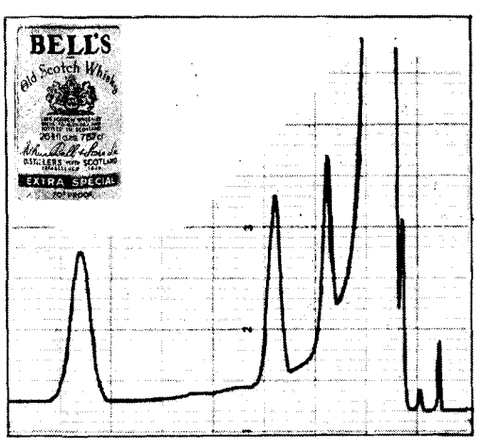
But first, it may be worth explaining why a journal like the NEW STATESMAN should concern itself in such a matter. There is on the Left a strain of corrupted puritanism which conceives that questions relating to food and drink are essentially trivial: against this, however, should be set the tradition of socialists like Raymond Postgate, who saw that foisting rubbish on the people by way of sustenance is one of the most basic ways of expressing contempt for them, and that the way a country drinks is part of its culture, worthy of a little study. Some people may think that the condition of Scotch whisky is a matter purely for the well-to-do elite: this idea, however, is based on a misunderstanding of the intentions of the mass-market organisers, and provides no basis for a rational response to their challenge. Over and above this, the history of Scotch whisky makes a classic case-study of British capitalism in action. Ours is a capitalism which appears to be, characteristically, more interested in groping towards ultimate monopoly than in the achievement of present profit. On the basis of the Scotch whisky experience, it is thus possible to argue that British capitalism is unusually well fitted to hasten that sad process which Max Weber described as 'the disenchantment of the world'.

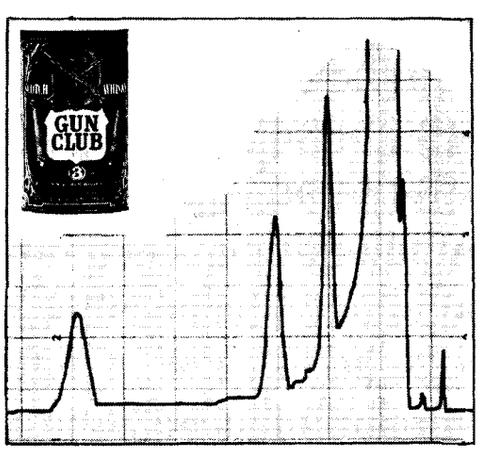
[1] *Scotch: the Formative Years*. Constable, 1970

SUPERFLUOUS AS THEY may be for expert opinion, we must start with some definitions. 'Malt whisky', like the brandy of Cognac, is produced in a pot-still, which even today is not much more elaborate than the sort of thing which was used in the early Middle Ages (and maybe a lot earlier): a metal pot in which the alcohols produced in fermented barley are boiled off from the less volatile compounds present, and then returned to liquid form by cooling-off in a suitable pipe. The essential aspects of this process are that it is *discontinuous* (in that the spirit has to be passed through several times, the still being cooled off and cleaned out between cycles), and *idiosyncratic* (in that a pot still using local ingredients will produce a particular flavour which cannot be reproduced in another locality). Overwhelmingly, the main constituent is ethyl alcohol, a colourless, tasteless (though intoxicating) fluid with a simple chemical structure: two carbon atoms, with attached to them five hydrogen atoms and a 'hydroxyl group' of one oxygen atom and another hydrogen.

Vodka, the most characterless form of oblivion that the liquor trade offers, is tasteless because it is merely ethyl alcohol and water. But in many Scottish environments, a pot-still produces ethyl alcohol naturally flavoured with traces of immensely more complex 'higher alcohols', in which the carbon atoms proliferate, giving rise to all manner of subsidiary structures. The effects on human physiology of the higher alcohols are only dimly understood: empirically, however, there is no doubt that they are capable, in whisky and in brandy, of generating the most subtle of taste-sensations and, when consumed immoderately, the most painful of hangovers. Indeed, the combination of alcohols which a







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Is Teacher's honest & truthful?

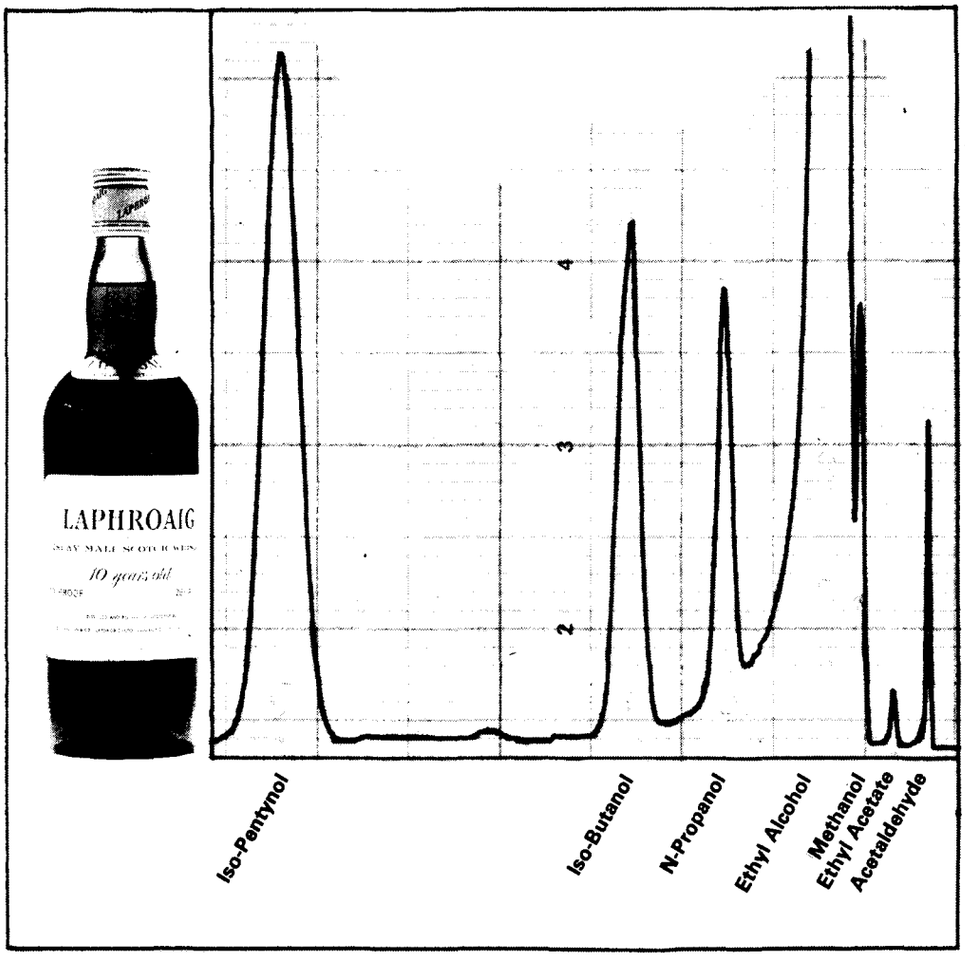
'Teacher's contains more malt than other popular blends' – the claim, by one of the best-selling whiskies, to be more 'Scotch' than its rivals, can be checked by chemical analysis. A gas-chromatograph separates out and quantifies the different forms of alcohol present in whisky samples: on the charts produced, the heavy, complex alcohols which give malt whisky its flavour appear on the left, and the lighter, simpler alcohols of the cheaper grain whisky appear on the right.

First, for comparison, comes the profile of Laphroaig, a classic straight-malt whisky. Moving from right to left, each peak reaches higher as the more complex types of alcohol are registered (the exception, going right off the chart, is ethyl alcohol, C_2H_5OH, or 'pure' alcohol: the tasteless, colourless fluid which is the main constituent of all spirits). The clearest indicator of malt whisky is the sharp peak of iso-pentynol ($C_5H_{11}OH$). In grain whisky, the peaks run just the other way. MacArthur's, a fast-growing cut-price whiskey (bottom left) shows a pattern starkly different from Laphroaig: after the basic ethyl alcohol, it has an impressive peak for the closely-related n-propanol, and the weakest of 'blips' for iso-pentynol. Nearly all of a MacArthur's bottle must be filled with grain spirit – legally, it can call itself 'Scotch', but it would taste much the same wherever it was made.

The better-quality blends fall, understandably, somewhere in between. Teacher's advertising claim is supported (table, right) by the fact that its iso-pentynol content came out just a little higher than those of its other independent rival Bell's, and White Horse, one of the many blends produced by the mighty Distillers combine. On graphs reduced to fit our page, the difference is not clear, but it comes out in figures of the iso-pentynol column in the table. Given experimental error-margins, however, Teacher's superiority could be a damned close-run thing.

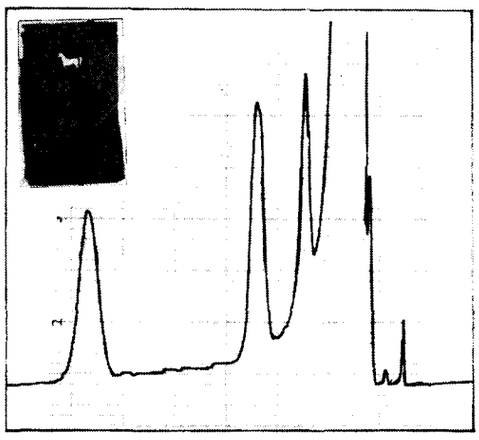
We tested several 'Continental specials', bought in a Calais supermarket and selected for their socially-ambitious labelling. Figures are scarcely required to confirm that the profiles of Gun Club (below, left) and Winchester (below right) bear little of the malt Scotch character. The human palate came to the same conclusion as the gas-chromatograph. (Even Gun Club, however, managed to do a little better on the iso-pentynol register than MacArthur's.) Such whiskies can only be sold as 'Scotch' because Britain's own laws have made the definition of whisky vague to the point of being meaningless: they now endanger the indentity of an export worth £520 million a year.

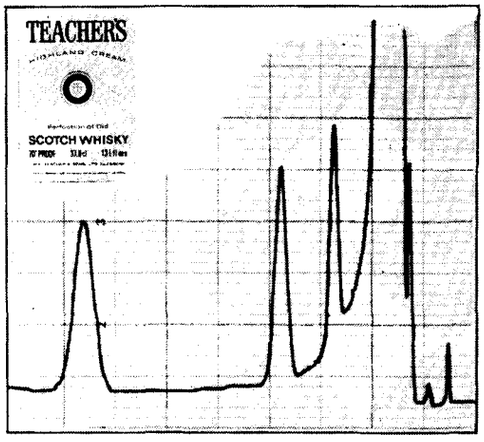
Analyses by Briant & Harman, London SE1.

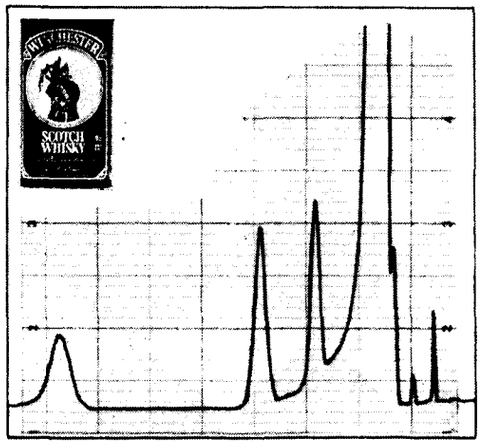


Mg/litre of Sample

Sample	Acetaldehyde	Ethyl Acetate	Methanol	N-Propanol	Iso-Butanol	Iso-Pentynol
Laphroaig	77	23	262	195	353	794
MacArthur's	27	27	187	374	159	168
Bell's	34	38	284	190	247	339
Gun Club	27	26	273	270	228	208
Winchester	43	31	193	191	235	149
Teacher's	32	28	314	349	303	408
White Horse	36	14	268	222	354	371







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Photographs by John Sturrock

pot-still produces may well be unpalatable or destructively poisonous – certainly if the proportion of methyl alcohol, CH_3OH, is not kept down – and it will never be pleasant until it has matured for several years.

'Grain whisky' is produced by a *continuous* process, in a far more complex 'patent still', and the essential point is that the product is *consistent*, rather than idiosyncratic. A patent still, adjusted in a certain manner, will turn out the same spirit whether it is located in Murmansk or the Isle of Islay. The principle employed is similar to that used in oil-refining: namely that simple hydrocarbons like ethyl alcohol vaporise at temperatures which leave more complex compounds, such as the higher alcohols, still in a liquid state. Whereas a pot still produces ethyl alcohol unavoidably 'contaminated' with other alcohols, the cooling column (or 'rectifier') of a patent still can condense out ethyl alcohol, or any other desired alcohol, in virtually pure form. The result is not dangerous, or unpredictable: but it is largely characterless. Output of malt whisky is severely limited by the number of sites in Scotland where a distinctively palatable product will emerge from a pot-still: output of grain whisky is merely a matter of installing more plant, wherever it may be.

An individual malt whisky cannot be copied, because chemistry and biochemistry are still far away from being able to say which of its many 'contaminations' are involved in its taste. What we can do, with the delicate analyses produced by gas-chromatography (see illustrations) is at least try to distinguish between pot-still and patent-still products. We know, for instance, that iso-pentynol, an alcohol built around five carbon atoms, is characteristic of malt whisky – so that Laphroiag, a famous Isle of Islay Scotch, is richer in this than it is in any other detectable constituents except for ethyl alcohol and water. Iso-pentynol would scarcely appear at all in grain spirit: therefore the MacArthur's and the 'Continental specials' in our tests derive their traces of it from having had rather small quantities of malt whisky added to their grain-spirit base. Teacher's advertising claim is supported by the fact that on our tests its iso-pentynol content came out higher than any other blended whisky: that is, 406 milligrams per litre. But while the margin over MacArthur's was comfortable (168 mg/litre), the margins over White Horse (371) and Bell's (339) were tight, to say the least. And, whatever the value of iso-pentynol as an indicator, it does not follow that 'spiking' a grain spirit with it will produce anything like Laphroiag or Glen Grant.

BOTH OBJECTIVE SCIENCE and subjective human taste suggest that the only real 'Scotch' is pot-still malt whisky. Logically, it should always have remained a special product with a special price, which most of us would drink only on special occasions – grain spirit, after all, blended with a little malt for flavour, makes a perfectly acceptable drink for many purposes (certainly in mixed drinks, where the use of a straight malt would be intensely barbaric). British law, however, says that any whisky made in Scotland out of barley mash may be offered for sale as Scotch, although the highly-productive patent-still installations of the Scottish Lowlands might just as well be in Watford for all the individuality of their product. This situation is, as they say, no accident: it came about through one of the first victories of organised commercial muscle over a nascent consumer interest, setting a precedent all too often repeated.

For most of the 19th century whisky remained a localised drink, produced by the Scots for themselves, and largely consumed by the working-class. (Brandy was the Victorian gentleman's spirit.) It was produced in pot stills, and there was nothing 'disenchanted' or predictable about the world that it represented: the adventurous person buying Scotch (or 'aqua') in an unfamiliar house might get anything from white lightning to a spirit of miraculous distinction. The continuous-process patent still had been invented in 1830 by Aeneas Coffey, but it was not until the 1860s that any substantial experiments were made in blending its mild, reliable output with the fiercely individual Highland spirits. (The suggestion that Johnnie Walker, a typical blended whisky, was 'born in 1820' is manifestly absurd, in that the mechanism for producing it did not even exist at that time. John Walker did set up business as a Kilmarnock grocer in that year, and he no doubt sold some local 'aqua' to the locals. It would not have been much like the product that his successors, now controlled by Distillers, turned into the world's largest-selling whisky.)

Phylloxera, devastating the French vineyards and brandy-tankers in the 1870s, coincided with the discovery that large-scale capital could organise national marketing of consumer products: and that whisky, made suitably docile by the operations of the patent still, was a straightforward case for treatment. By 1900, 'Scotch' was a booming trade, but there was one awkward question: what, actually, *was* Scotch whisky? The period being one of international agitation for legal restraints upon the commercialisation of food and drink, such a question was bound to be disputed.

In 1904 the Islington Borough Council proceeded against two publicans for breaching the Food and Drug Act by selling spirits 'not of the nature, substance and quality demanded': James Davidge of Hornsey Road having sold as 'Fine Old Scotch Whisky' a bottle containing 90 per cent patent-still spirit, apparently made in the year of sale[2]. Also in 1904, the Sale of Whisky Bill was laid before Parliament, causing extreme displeasure to William Ross, managing director of the Distillers Company Ltd (DCL) – which was already the largest group operating patent-stills in Scotland, and which had sprung to the defence of the unhappy Davidge. The Bill, Ross complained, sought

> . . . to draw a sharp line of distinction between whisky made in a pot still and that made in a patent still – inferentially to the detriment of the latter.

In the campaign which followed, as the Islington prosecutions were supplanted by a Royal Commission, the campaigners, led by the *Lancet*, actually had two objectives. One was to stop the sale of unmatured spirit, which was the principal cause of nasty experiences with malt whisky. The other was not to prohibit the sale of blends, or even of pure patent-still grain spirit: but to insist that the contents of every bottle should be specified on the label. This, said the *Lancet*, could not be

> in the slightest degree . . . a menace to the interest of the Trade. They have only to deal fairly with the public by disclosing in accurate terms the nature of the article which they offer for sale. According to the view that the public exhibit a preference of mixtures or substitutes the Trade ought not to lose by revealing the fact that the article is not a pure unblended spirit . . .

Numerous blenders and patent-still operators, not to mention *The Times*, took the view that no such disclosure was necessary. The arguments rolled out were of a kind that still appear in almost any contemporary argument about consumer protection. The public, said *The Times*, would not buy blends based on grain whisky if they didn't like them.

> The patent still whisky is pure alcohol *plus* the kind and amount of flavour that the public like. The pot still whisky is not so much to the public taste, and if anything it is less wholesome.

A spokesman for the London licensed trade said that people found blends less 'bilious'. Mr Ross, speaking for DCL, said

> We ourselves do not think the public care in the slightest how whisky is made, or the composition of the materials so long as they are assured that the materials are thoroughly sound and that the whisky is well matured . . .

Others thought even the assurance of

[2]The other case concerned Irish whiskey, and developed similarly to the Scotch case.

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maturity went too far, such as the chairman of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Wholesale Wine and Spirit Dealers Association:

> Personally, however, from my own experience I know that many people prefer their whisky new – they would not thank you for an old whisky.

And of course there was the appalling prospect – revived in our own time to resist the date-stamping of preserved food – that the public might be confused by an over-supply of information. One substantial blender came out against declaring the ingredients of a blend on the label, on the grounds that it might be

> rather misleading than otherwise. I don't think it would be any guide to the consumer, he would not be a bit the wiser as to the whisky he was getting . . .

Rather ironically, this was a Mr W. C. Teacher, representing the firm of the same name, which has come in 1978 to the view that the public might, after all, be able to handle the information.

In 1908 came the decisive Interim Report of the Royal Commission on the nature of Scotch. This was the same year in which the French Government passed the first of the laws which strictly protect the nature of Cognac brandy: it can only be made in a pot still, through the use of carefully-specified local materials. The Royal Commission took a very different attitude in the case of Scotch, and the DCL lobby got practically all of the liberties for which they had been pressing. The Commission submitted:

> 1. That no restrictions should be placed upon the process of, or apparatus used in, the distillation of any spirit to which the term 'whisky' may be applied as a trade description.

The materials could be pure malt, as used in the pot still, or a mixture of malt with unmalted cereals, as used in patent-still operations. The materials could be imported from outside Scotland, as they are extensively today. The only restriction was that manufacture must occur in Scotland, and that no spirit should be sold without having matured for three years. The Royal Commission should not be left, however, without some reference to the evidence of Colonel George Grant, of the famous Glenlivet malt distillery, who was in many ways prophetic. He did not object to blending as such, he said, provided that the product did not contain more than 50 per cent grain whisky. But he saw a continuing tendency

> to use more and more of the cheaper article, the patent still whisky, and less malt whisky. And without indicating to the public that it was patent still whisky, or a blend of malt and patent still whisky.
>
> Q – Are those blends of bad quality simply bad in quality because they contain a large quantity of grain spirit? A – That is it.[3]

IT HAS TAKEN a long time for Colonel Grant's chickens to come home to roost, but they look fairly frightening birds in the light of this week's report that a Neddy working party can see no obvious way to neutralise an impending Japanese attack on the £250 million-a-year export trade which the product we now call Scotch has built up. 'If they can do it with cars, televisions, audio equipment and cameras, they can and will do it with whisky', states Mr Dougie McDougall, chairman of the working party.

The reason they might succeed results precisely from the fact that Distillers and their allies, sixty years ago, managed to blur the identity of Scotch. Japanese research is formidable, but it is unlikely to have been able to reproduce the many flavours of Scotland's individual pot-still whiskies.

For many years, it seemed that the Distillers combine had a charter for success. Properly-matured malt whisky – eight years, going on 12, was Colonel Grant's idea of a minimum age – would always have been too quirky and expensive a product for mass-market sales, and in any case the quantity could not have been expanded sufficiently. But with the ability to blend in any undisclosed proportion they chose, Distillers were able to produce a fairly cheap and swiftly-acceptable product, dressed-up for the market-place with a good deal of dubious traditionalism, like 'Johnnie Walker's' pedigree. (To take another example: all whisky is a naturally colourless spirit. Some malt whiskies, aged long in sherry casks, acquire a mellow tint. In blending, this is achieved by adding burnt sugar.)

As Distillers' market share grew, they were able to keep down the market price of Scotch, and undercut the prices of 'independents' who tried to preserve their position by including larger proportions of expensive, long-matured malt whisky. To Ross and his successors at DCL, this has never appeared as the pursuit of monopoly, and he himself put the matter in the benevolent light of national interest:

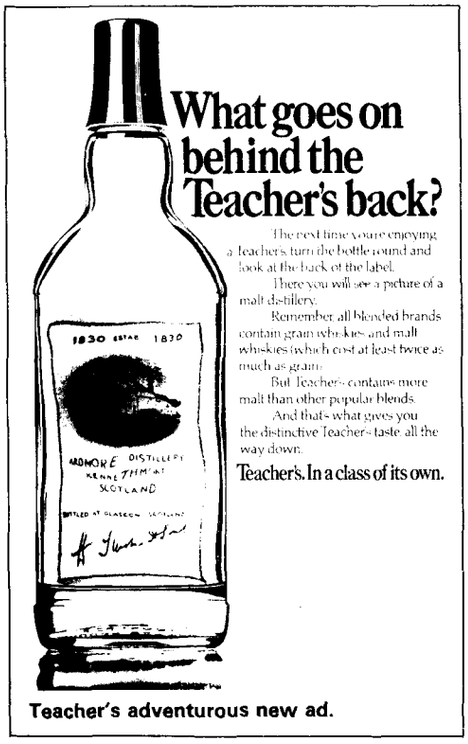
> . . . I am not ashamed to be regarded as one of a combine. I go further and say that if Britain is to retain its prestige in the trade of the world, the more our industries of a similar nature can . . . combine together in order to effect economies, the more likely they will be to retain if not increase out share of international trade . . .

The result, however, has been something close to a monopoly, in which independent blenders have been steadily reduced – rapidly, in recent years – until Teacher's and Bell's are the only substantial survivors. The process is aided by an aspect of market behaviour which is often forgotten: complex products like Scotch whisky are essentially acquired tastes, so that consumers need time, and information, to learn to discriminate among them. Scotch, by the choice of its controllers, has been sold for many generations in circumstances of maximum mystification, where every advantage lies with the concern which turns out a cheap, bland product which will give quick returns in the retail trade.

The trouble is that two, or any number, can play a game like that. It took, in the event, the Great Inflation of the early '70s to precipitate real trouble: but Distillers themselves are now being undercut in the British and foreign markets by 'Scotch whiskies' which, as our analyses show, bear scarcely any of the character of actual Scotch. Distillers, having once seen the British and world market almost under their control, now have their own weapons turned against them: any cereal-spirit made by a patent-still located in Scotland, and kept three years, can be exported and sold, under a tartan label, as Scotch whisky. There are several international firms which will do so regardless of Scotland's interest, knowing that few consumers have been educated to know the difference.

Scotch always required a more complex, and strenuously regulated marketing regime. First, malt whisky should have been distinguished as the only authentic article, and hedged about with definitions like Cognac (which the Japanese have yet to threaten). This could only be sold at a profit, to cover its formidable price of replacement, and few of us would be able to afford more than an educational bottle or so at this time of year. Blended whisky should then have been subjected to strict labelling conventions, enabling the producers with high malt content to make larger trading profits to cover their purchase of malt. And nothing, of course, should be shipped out of Scotland as bulk Scotch for blending elselwhere, except long and expensively-matured malt whisky. Imitators could never be eliminated: but the gas-chromatograph, as we have shown on earlier pages, would make their task a great deal harder.

Meanwhile, out of the heart of the industry has come the first measure of good sense. Teacher's, repenting their Edwardian errors, have begun to talk openly about the ingredients of their product. The New Year might be a good time for the Government to start thinking about making the habit universal.


What goes on behind the Teacher's back?
The next time you're enjoying a Teacher's turn the bottle round and look at the back of the label.
There you will see a picture of a malt distillery.
Remember, all blended brands contain grain whiskies and malt whiskies (which cost at least twice as much as grain).
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[3] *Scotch: the Formative Years*, pp. 1-61.

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SPAIN
Julie Flint

What future for the parties after the referendum?

Searching for the handsome man

ON THE MORNING after the vote count in the referendum pushing a democratic constitution past the finishing line, Spain's best-known political cartoonist pictured premier Adolfo Suarez lying flat out, glumly insisting: 'A success. It's been a complete success.'

The prostrate premier bore little resemblance to the normally jaunty chap who sits atop cartoonist Peridis' Roman Column in the daily *El Pais*, prancing, pirouetting and performing wondrous feats of balance while Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez, Presley-like quiff over one eye, attempts to shin up the lower reaches of his pedestal and Communist leader Santiago Carrillo shouts his merry *vivas* to King, country and constitution, asking to be invited to every party but seeking, for the moment, no place on the pedestal.

Three years after the death of Gen. Franco, Spain has buried his unlovely, unloved Fundamental Laws and voted 11-1 in favour of a constitution guaranteeing basic human and political rights and changing Spain from 'a destined unity in the universal' – whatever that meant – into a 'social and democratic state of law.'

At the top of the pedestal, however, Suarez faces a new problem. The ultra-Right celebrated doubling the support obtained in last year's general elections, indulging in bizarre mathematical contortions to puff its 8 per cent anti-constitution vote into something more muscular. And Basque nationalists claimed that the abstention of 51 per cent in the Basque provinces was a 'spectacular' triumph for their demands for powerful regional government. But surprise nationwide abstention of 32 per cent indicated a disenchantment with reform that dimmed Suarez's hopes of quick general elections to turn his minority government into a majority one.

What happens now is far from clear. Suarez has 30 days from the promulgation of the constitution, expected around year-end, to decide between elections or a parliamentary investiture, valid – if he can find the friends and then keep them – until June 15, 1981.

Neither option is easy. Despite a swing away from the Left this year, elections might not give Suarez's moderate Union of the Democratic Centre the extra 10 seats it needs for a bare majority in the Chamber of deputies. Investiture, favoured by Suarez's closest associate, Vice Premier Fernando Abril Martorell, would require costly concessions to regionalists or to conservatives whose support would be needed to scrape the government home.

A third possibility which would nicely shift future responsibility would be for Suarez to announce that he was calling for investiture with no pacts but with the assurance that he would dissolve Parliament and force general elections unless he were given a healthy vote of confidence to continue. A manoeuvre of this sort would also twist the arms of the Socialist and Communist parties, Spain's second and third-largest, who have said they will not support Suarez now that their constitutional 'Consensus' is over, but who want municipal elections before general elections.

Even if elections produced no UCD majority, no one but Suarez would be able to govern alone or in coalition – barring a massive rally by the left – and Suarez could blame the difficulties arising from a time-wasting, perhaps indecisive, election on the refusal of the Left to cooperate with him to arrange autonomies, revive the economy and fight terrorism. Despite speculation that their referendum success may force the Basque Nationalists to rethink their strategy of violence, the guerrillas have now killed three people in the week since the referendum and are unlikely to hang up their holsters unless Madrid agrees to withdraw the hated Spanish police from the Basque Country.

General elections have a strong attraction – provided Suarez thinks he can win. Polls show that the UCD is at its strongest since June 1977. Having made up the ground lost earlier this year as unemployment passed 7 per cent and terrorism reached levels unseen in Franco's days, Suarez will never be better placed to maximise the advantage he won by his leadership during the period of transition. The Socialists acknowledge that a recent military plot has damaged their election chances and the Communists acknowledge that ground has been lost to charges that the party hierarchy is undemocratic, despite its genial Eurocommunist face.

Investiture has clear disadvantages – unless election hopes look dim. In the absence of the left-wing support, the government would be forced to negotiate for regional independent or conservative support, with no prospect even then of a strong base. Even forgetting Suarez's desire to locate the UCD on the Centre-Left – at least in the public imagination – a pact with the Popular Alliance party of former Franco minister Manuel Fraga, whom the irreverent Peridis draws on all fours, barking for the nation to be brought to heel, is undesirable because of Fraga's authoritarian character and his opposition to regional rule. But an alliance with Basque and Catalan deputies would be extremely costly, especially at a time when autonomy statutes are being negotiated, and would risk undercutting urgent national problems.

The socialists, who alone can give Suarez a strong majority, have made clear they will consider no form of coalition without general elections. Even then, Suarez might be extremely reluctant to give the pushy, popular Felipe a hand up his pedestal. Once up, he might be extremely difficult to get off.

Whichever way Suarez goes, one thing is certain: sooner or later, he is going to have to descend from his column to muck in with other mortals. His personal charm, certified by those who have seen him at ground level, won't help him or his party unless shown in public. And with the Socialists promising tough opposition, his political agility won't win points unless it is put on display in Parliament. (In the 14 months of debate on the Constitution, Suarez spoke up only once, immediately before the final vote.)

The main lesson of the referendum must be that neither Suarez nor his loyal opposition have kept the interest of a public that is preoccupied with rising unemployment and rising prices and ill-informed about a Constitution that monopolised Parliament for more than a year. Government television, true to character, did its best to make the constitution completely indigestible, while referendum advertising, far from shedding light on what voting would actually mean, may well have decided some voters to spend the campaign in bed.

To shift the apathy, Suarez is going to have to stump. Sitting on his pedestal and asking 'Who's the prettiest of them all?' won't do. Fraga may be no beauty. But Felipe is good-looking too.

Law

'Sus' law under attack

LAST WEEK the notorious 'sus' law, which police use with increasing regularity to pick up young blacks in the street, was considered by Parliament for the first time in more than 100 years. Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act enables police to arrest 'every suspected person or reputed thief frequenting or loitering about or in . . . any street or any highway, or any place adjacent to a street or highway with intent to commit an arrestable offence'. Arresting officers do not have to produce any independent evidence; and due to an amendment passed in 1871, they are not obliged to 'show that the person suspected was guilty of any particular act or acts tending to show his purpose or intent'. Individuals can be charged and convicted of 'being a suspected person' before they have committed any crime, and there is no right of trial by jury. The maximum penalty is £100 and/or three months in prison.

The occasion for the debate was the second reading of the Suspected Persons (Abolition) Bill, proposed by Lord Avebury. The motion was lost by 82 to 32, but campaigners against 'sus' were encouraged that as many as 32 peers voted in favour of the second reading.

Lord Avebury pointed out that police in some areas use 'sus' with a great deal more enthusiasm than in others. London, Liverpool and Manchester account for 17 per cent of the population of England and Wales, yet last year 74 per cent of all 'sus' charges took place in those areas. Enormous discrepancies within Greater London make it hard not to conclude that some police operate the law in a racist fashion. 'In the second quarter of 1978', Lord Avebury said, '65 West Indians were arrested in Lambeth, which has a total new Commonwealth American ethnic origin population of 29,488; in Brent and Harrow, where there are slightly more West Indians, 31,859, there were only 14 arrests of West Indians', in Haringey, where there were 25,211 West Indians, there were only two arrests.

Police claim that the 'sus' law is an important deterrent, but, said Lord Avebury, 'there appears to be no evidence whatsoever to back it up'. Lord Gifford, supporting the Bill, quoted from a report by the Catholic Commission for Racial Justice of an interview with a Metropolitan police sergeant:

> He admitted that some policemen are racist and that although they admit it to their friends and colleagues they do not make their views known to their superiors. He quoted a number of racist incidents he had experienced. Asked what he did in such situations, he said, 'Well, what can I do? You can't report it because you work with them – and who would take any notice?'

An impressive number of organisations have

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AMERICA
William Frankel

Turmoil in the civil rights movement

The Bakke case legacy

THE ISSUES raised in the Bakke case went to the very heart of the American dream – the ideal of equality. The Supreme Court handed down its decision on the Bakke case last June. The facts (in contrast to the judgments) were clear. Allan Bakke had twice been rejected for a place at the Davis Medical School of the University of California. To aid disadvantaged minority applicants (mainly black), the school had instituted an affirmative action programme which reserved for them 16 out of the 100 places available. The blacks who were admitted under that programme had lesser qualifications than Bakke who therefore claimed that he had been discriminated against because he was white and that it constituted a breach of the Equal Protection provision of the 14th Amendment. The university authorities, in the course of the proceedings, conceded that Bakke would, in all probability, have been admitted were he black.

Bakke is not a Jew but, like all other civil rights issues, the case struck a very responsive chord among the rank-and-file and the leadership of America's Jewish community. But it created a conflict too. On the one hand the Jews had been in the van of the civil rights movement from its beginnings. They were prominent in the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. Jewish organisations gave every assistance, including the submission of briefs and legal representation, in the major court cases involving civil rights for blacks. Rabbis marched with Martin Luther King at Selma and Birmingham and idealistic young Jews participated in all the civil rights demonstrations; some lost their lives. In all these activities, the Jewish organisations, efficient and influential, collaborated closely with the black leadership in the aims they shared – opposition to discrimination and the creation of the just society which alone could assure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all minorities.

During the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson, Congress and the Supreme Court had together gone a long way towards fulfilling the objectives of the civil rights movement. But to the black-in-the-street, these decisions on high were remote from the practical circumstances of his life. The derelict and squalid ghettos in the large cities and the depressingly high degree of unemployment gave blacks little opportunity to forge ahead. Unsatisfied by the progress of civil rights, the blacks started asking for their share of those factors which could raise them to the level of the whites – educational facilities, jobs, political plums. They said that because of their enslavement and their long and harrowing history of oppression, they were entitled to some preference.

It was this claim for preferential treatment that brought them into conflict with their hitherto loyal allies, the Jews. First the Jews objected to any kind of institutionalised discrimination as a matter of principle. And secondly, as a direct and practical matter, it was clear to them that if the blacks were to receive a bigger slice of the cake, somebody else was going to get a smaller one, and that somebody was the Jews. Both Jews and blacks are predominantly urban with the Jews in the big cities disproportionately represented in the schools and in occupations like teaching, law and medicine to which the blacks aspired. The Jews had always fought for equality of opportunity and when they had it, made the most of it. They never expected, or received, advantages. The blacks, however, were not asking for equality of opportunity but for equality in fact and not later, but now. They were, in effect, saying to the Jews, 'We want a share of what you have; true, we don't possess your qualifications, but that's due to our 350 years history of deprivation.'

As intense as had been the Jewish support for civil rights was their reaction to what they termed reverse discrimination. To them, a racial quota could never be benign because it flouted the constitutional principle of equality. They were prepared to encourage the competition of other minorities within the merit system, but giving preference to some racial groups meant the creation of new inequities in the attempt to rectify the old ones. It was this issue that surfaced in the Bakke case, described in an article in *The New Republic* last year as 'the collapse of the once proud and productive alliance between the Jews and blacks in this country'. A record number of 68 *amicus curiae* briefs were submitted to the Supreme Court in this case: 42 of them, including those of all the black organisations, supported the medical school's quota system; 26 briefs supported Bakke, among them the submissions of the Jewish organisations which favoured affirmative action but opposed quotas.

The Court gave its ruling on June 28 1978. Nine Justices expressed their opinions in 154 pages of complex and often conflicting arguments. Nobody is quite sure what they decided and the confusion which now exists will undoubtedly stimulate more litigation in this area for years to come. However, most analysts agree in drawing two conclusions.

The first is that, by a 5-4 majority, the Court decided that racial and ethnic quotas for admission to universities were unlawful (as a result, Bakke himself has been admitted to the Davis Medical School). Secondly, a differently composed 5-4 majority decided that race could be a factor among others in admissions policies and that preference could be given to racial minorities, provided that specific places were not set aside for them.

Jewish organisations found reassurance in the outcome of the case for what was more important to them than anything else was the prohibition of racial quotas. Quotas had been used in the past to exclude them from schools and universities and, were they to be accepted now, might be applied to restrict them to their proportion of the population in schools and in jobs. Jews constitute 2.7% of the population of the USA, a fraction of the Jewish student and faculty representation at, say, Harvard University. Serious reservations are entertained by Jewish leaders as to the manner in which the second part of the judgment could be applied. The Court gave no guidance on how much of a factor race should be, giving universities an unfettered power to manipulate admission standards. But so far, this apprehension has not been publicly expressed. Perhaps this is because of a reluctance to exacerbate further the painful divergence between Jewish and black interests which has been exploited by black anti-semites. The influential black weekly newspaper New York's *Amsterdam News* headlined the result of the case as 'Bakke; We Lose!' and commented, 'the fact that blacks have now lost the case may further divide blacks from Jews at the national and local levels'.

Anti-semitism on the part of some blacks is no new phenomenon in the United States. It

Law

now lined up against 'sus' including the Runnymede Trust, the National Association of Probation Officers, Community Relations Councils and the National Council for Civil Liberties. A Home Office working party set up to look into the problem in 1976 decided that the Vagrancy Act should be repealed. But it decided, too, that there was still 'a place for the criminal law in this area of social control'. If Section 4 is abolished, the government plans to enact a new law which would be 'limited to the case of a person whose antecedent conduct in a public place reveals his intent to commit an arrestable offence', but which would otherwise be very much the same – and open to similar abuse. It looks like another case of the Home Office bowing to pressure from the police to encroach on individual liberty. As Lord Gifford argued in last week's debate, there are plenty of adequate safeguards without Section 4:

> The public are protected by the laws of burglary, theft and robbery and all the other armoury of offences in the Theft Act and other statutes; and if the price for the protection of the public must be that the police must observe a little bit longer and arrest people when an offence has been committed, then that is the price to be paid for liberty of the subject.

ANOTHER BILL, aimed at strengthening police powers, has passed its second reading. The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill seeks to enable police to detain individuals on suspicion without making a formal arrest. If passed, its practical effect will be to legitimise in Scotland police practice which is currently widespread and unlawful.

Anyone suspected of involvement in an imprisonable offence will be able to be detained at a police station or elsewhere in order that police may establish his identity or question him about the offence, or simply because detention would facilitate police enquiries. The maximum period of detention would be four hours during which his right to silence remains although he will have to give his name and address.

The police will also be given the power generally to detain in a public place anyone suspected of involvement in an offence in order to ask or verify his name and address and to question him about the suspected offence. So too may a witness be detained in order to obtain his name and address.

Civil libertarians are justifiably worried that it affords plenty of scope for abuse, and the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties will be launching a major campaign on the Bill early in the New Year. Last week's publications of the worst ever Scottish Criminal Statistics will make their task especially difficult.

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rose to the surface during the New York teachers' strike in 1968 and has now again been fed by the widespread conviction among blacks that the Jews have betrayed them on a vital issue. For black leadership is persuaded that quotas are the only practical way of dealing with problems of racial disadvantage and of achieving a rapid improvement in ther situation. But some respected black voices take a different view. Thomas Sowell, Professor of Economics at UCLA, for example, strongly opposes quotas. To him they mean that 'black people don't have it'. Preference of this nature denotes 'incompetence, and black achievement becomes synonymous with charity and payoffs'.

Recognising the dangers to the civil rights movement generally of a split among the hitherto highly successful allies, 40 organisations including the major Jewish groups, the NAACP and the Urban League have made a statement that 'our differences on the merits as well as on the ultimate impact of the Bakke case are deep and not to be minimised . . . (but) we shall work together in the future, as we have in the past, to secure full civil rights for all our citizens and to help realise those social and economic conditions in which alone the fulfilment of these rights is possible'. So as not to add more fuel to the anti-Jewish backlash from the Bakke case, Jewish organisations have been recommended to stay out of the case of *Weber v Kaiser Aluminium & Steel Company*, now before the Supreme Court, on quotas in a training programme.

American Jewish leadership supports 'affirmative action' to assist disadvantaged minorities, even though in the short run Jews are likely to be the main losers. But they believe that, in the long run, the whole of American society will benefit from a removal of the conditions which perpetuate racial tensions. For the universities of the USA, the Bakke case had already meant the revoking of 'race conscious' admissions policies. Davis itself has introduced a new process which does not involve setting aside a specific number of places. But in the main, the upshot is likely to be the development of a system which will give blacks what has been described as 'an edge' while avoiding blatant and institutionalised racial preference. The unresolved question is whether the blacks will regard that as enough in this age of immediacy.

CYPRUS
Denis MacShane

Pointers to the future in the divided island

Has Labour anything to say?

IT WAS with disarming, if hardly tactful, frankness, that my official Turkish-Cypriot guide round Turkish controlled Nicosia remarked of the late Archbishop Makarios; 'The British were too kind when they exiled him to the Seychelles: they should have strung him up and all the rest of those damned bishops'. His bitterness, momentarily overcoming his public relations training, helps to explain why, a year after Makarios's death and four years after the Turkish invasion and occupation of nearly half the island, the prospects for Turkish concessions to ease the way to a settlement still seem distinctly remote.

The Archbishop never bothered to learn more than a few words of Turkish during his seventeen years as President of Cyprus and there are still too many Turkish Cypriots – about one in five of the island's population of 650,000 is Turkish – for whom Makarios, and now his much invoked memory, represents union with Greece, rather than an independent non-aligned Cyprus; Enosis was the rallying call of Greek Cypriot politics from the first Enosis riots in Nicosia in 1931 through to the EOKA campaign of the 1950s. Arguably, Makarios might have felt that by appearing super-Greek himself he was able to contain the fanatical Hellenism of the Greek Cypriot far right. But this theory collapsed in 1974 when, with the active backing of the Greek junta, the CIA and Dr Kissinger, EOKA B ousted Markarios and installed Nicos Samson. The coup in turn led to the Turkish invasion to protect the lives of Turkish Cypriots who would undoubtedly have been on EOKA B's death-list once they had settled scores with trade union leaders and left-wing politicians. The mercy mission quickly turned into a massive land grab, as the Turks occupied just under forty per cent of the territory including the most prosperous tourist areas and farming land; 200,000 Greek Cypriots were expelled.

The Turkish Cypriots had matched the development of the politics of Greek Enosis every inch of the way. Turkish politicians echoed Makarios's campaign for Enosis in the 1940s and 1950s with their own call for partition. EOKA had its Turkish equivalent, TMT, which divided its time between killing as traitors those Turkish-Cypriot leaders who called for co-operation with the Greeks and attacking Greek villages. In the last decade of colonial rule Britain encouraged Turkish Cypriot aggression on classical divide and rule principles: a blind colonial eye was turned to the importation of arms from Turkey.

Against this background of pessimistic history three quite separate events took place in Nicosia late in November which give a pointer to the way the never-predictable Cyprus problem may develop. First, several hundred Greek Cypriot women from the Turkish occupied areas sat down in Nicosia's main square completely disrupting the evening rush hour traffic. Each had lost a husband, son or brother during the Turkish invasion and they have still not been told officially if the missing relatives are dead. The Turkish authorities dismiss demonstrations like this as cunning Greek propaganda but the old ladies in black I spoke to seemed authentic enough in the details they gave of missing relatives.

Meanwhile – and secondly – in Turkish Nicosia they were burying a young student who had been shot dead in Istanbul – the fifth Turkish Cypriot student to fall victim to the terrorist violence unleashed by the fascist National Action Party in Turkey. The Turkish fascists are increasing their implantation in Cyprus. A front organisation called Turk Ocaği Derneği has been set up with support mainly culled from the 50,000 mainland Turks imported into Cyprus since 1974. One Turkish Cypriot magazine has published maps purporting to show the locations of training camps in Turkish occupied Cyprus for units of Grey Wolves, the National Action Party's killer squads. Turkish Cypriot journalists I met were worried that the murderous violence from mainland Turkey – 800 deaths so far in 1978 – will soon arrive in Cyprus. A third, more hopeful, sign is of contact between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot trade unions. Greek Cypriots are organised into two trade union groups – the communist dominated PEO and the right-wing SEK. These are mirrored on the Turkish side by the right-wing Turk-SEN and its newer militant rival Dev-IS. Under the auspices of their respective international organisations, leaders of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot trade unions have met together. A conference in Nicosia a few days ago was attended by trade unionists from all over the world and although denounced as a Greek publicity stunt by the Turkish authorities a senior Transport and General Workers official attending the conference made a point of crossing the Attila line to talk to Turkish Cypriot trade union leaders and said he would try to persuade the TGWU to agree to host a conference in London next year when Greek and Turkish Cypriot trade unionists could discuss common problems away from the difficult atmosphere of Cyprus.

Co-operation between Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers was commonplace before 1974. In Cyprus' biggest ever industrial dispute, a five month strike by miners in 1948, leaflets were issued with one half Greek and the other half Turkish, and meetings were jointly addressed by Greek and Turkish trade union leaders. They deserve more help from the TUC whose international department appears to share the Foreign Office's lack of concern about the occupation of nearly half a Commonwealth country by the army of a NATO ally.

The Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash is being encouraged to declare independence by Ankara. This will make the resumption of any inter-communal talks more difficult. The American proposals for Cyprus – cobbled together as a softener for lifting the Turkish arms embargo – have not been given an over-warm reception in Cyprus. The proposals reject Enosis but would still leave Cyprus split in half. The Greek Cypriot Socialist party RDEK has attacked them as part of a giant American super-plan for the region, encompassing the Camp David settlement and the propping up the Shah. Cyprus is important to America and NATO as a usefully placed bugging device to monitor radio communications in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is difficult not to conclude that Washington's main aim is to see Cyprus safe for NATO and shackled to American foreign policy interests in the region.

With the closing down of Britain's military involvement in Malta next year there are fears in Cyprus that Britain will step up her activities on the island, 99 miles of which constitute the two sovereign base areas. Britain just tags on to American coat tails: predictably Dr Owen has endorsed the American plan and even claimed some involvement in shaping it which has only increased suspicions about its worth in Nicosia. It would be interesting to know if the Labour Party's international department has any ideas on Cyprus. Labour politicians bear much responsibility for the suffering on the island – from Attlee's refusal to do for Cyprus what he did for India, to Callaghan's callous indifference in 1974.

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GERMANY
Gitta Sereny

A European country rejects the American version of history

Responding to 'Holocaust'

VIRTUALLY the whole of West Germany's TV viewing public will tune in for two hours each night from 22 to 26 January to their channel 3 – the equivalent to our BBC 2 – to see the American TV series *Holocaust.*

The decision last summer by WDR, Germany's largest television network, after weeks of bitter arguments behind the scenes, to buy the film, but to screen it only in January and on their cultural rather than national channel (thereby enabling regional stations to make their own decisions whether to show it or not), met with a cry of outrage in America – especially from the producers of the series. To them – this emerged clearly in a TV interview conducted by the *Tonight* programme after the film was shown on BBC last September – this was merely proof of Germany's continuing Nazi sentiments, and her head-in-the-sand attitude about the extermination of the Jews.

This reaction was, of course, understandable: the film, when shown in America in April, had drawn the largest ever viewing audience for a TV drama; it was to win a number of prizes and the makers considered it a masterwork. Indeed when, two days after the British screening, critically received but also seen by a virtually unprecedented number of viewers, an old Jewish lady in London killed herself, the producer of *Holocaust* was quoted as voicing regret over this event, but considering it as 'the greatest tribute ever paid to a TV production.' From this vantage point, the Germans' vacillations and final compromise had, no doubt, to seem suspicious and deplorable.

It is by no means easy to understand the Germans' trauma about the greatest crime that was committed in their name, 35 years ago. And the dilemma that faced them when they were offered this series was as complex as all of their reactions to the subject of the extermination of the Jews.

If WDR had elected to reject the film altogether – as they were urged to do by many people on the grounds of the film's lack of historical and artistic integrity – the German public would have attacked such a decision as being Nazi-inspired.

Had they decided to screen it on the first national channel at peaktime, the very same public, without any doubt, would have abused them for toadying to foreign opinion, without regard for the sensibilities of their own viewers.

BUYING the series, and scheduling it for the cultural channel, was a sensible compromise: the American producers got their money – about a million DM – and at the same time the network was not ramming the film down people's throats; the different Länder (West German states) control their own TV; each of them, no doubt reflecting local opinion and demand, would make their own decision whether to show it.

The most interesting decision however was to put the screening off until January, to allow for adequate preparation: not just editing and subtitling the film, but the most elaborate groundlaying that has probably ever been undertaken anywhere in preparation for a TV event.

First of all the West German network (WDR) themselves started by screening, on 10 and 17 December, a Swedish film made by the Czech director Hanus Weber Tscheckon, titled *They Never Gave Up*. This, I am told, is a powerful documentary on Jewish resistance, particularly important in this instance, as the *Holocaust* series seems at some pains to present, now in brilliant technicolour, the tired old contention of the Jews going to their death like sheep – without explaining, or perhaps understanding the circumstances which led to this impression.

On 11 January at 8.15 pm, all West German television stations will show a newly-prepared 45 minute documentary on anti-semitism in Germany and Austria before 1933.

On 18 January, four days before *Holocaust* begins, all German TV will screen at peak viewing time a specially prepared 90-minute documentation of the Final Solution. ('We, and all the other networks,' said a WDR spokesman, 'have, of course, shown any number of these over the years. The only difference now is that because of the controversy this American production is arousing, people might be more inclined not to switch off. We think that, already having read a good deal of criticism of the series in our press, they will *want* to be prepared. And we are very glad to make use of this revival of interest.') Continuing this encouragement of the revival of interest, WDR will follow each transmission of *Holocaust* in January with open-ended phone-in programmes, with historians, psychologists, churchleaders and survivors of extermination camps available in the studio to discuss questions. 'And we don't care how many hours we stay on the air' said a producer. 'All night if they want.'

The North Rhein-Westphalia Landeszentrale (provincial authority) for political education is preparing an *Introduction to the serialisation of Holocaust* in the form of a folio, for teachers and students, which will include reactions to the film from the USA, Britain and Israel; an enquiry into the validity of teaching history on TV, by means of 'soap opera', or, alternatively, documentaries; and documentary evidence, such as reproductions of the Wannsee Conference minutes, and the Korherr Report (collating the number of Jews remaining in various countries as of early 1943).

The Adolf Grimm Institute for Adult Education in Marl (Ruhr) is preparing similar material, with additional consideration, however, given to the problems of teaching about fascism, and suggestions on how to structure weekend and one-day seminars on the Final Solution.

The German Council (Koordinationsrat) for Christian-Jewish understanding in Frankfurt is preparing a special enlarged issue of their regular political information bulletin, which will combine material on National Socialism from previous issues with a special report on the 'Kristallnacht' prepared by the Munich historian Helmuth Kissler. 350,000 copies of this bulletin are being distributed to teachers throughout the Federal Republic in the hope of reaching (by means of a 'chain-letter system') all schoolchildren between the ages of 14 and 18.

THE Evangelical and Catholic Councils of German Churches are organising seminars and discussions before and following the screenings; 'Internationes', a UN agency in Germany, is collating German material to be disseminated in other countries; the 'Amerika-Houses' (US Information Agencies) all over Germany are scheduling discussion groups throughout the coming months; and historian Professor Knilli at the Technical University of Berlin, will conduct telephone discussions with 1200 'Berliners', (chosen at random) during and after the screening of the series, and then hold a series of seminars to study the controversies which will emerge.

All of these activities will be announced and publicised before and after each showing of *Holocaust* by the German television networks, who will display names and phone numbers of all organisations offering source material, and by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (federal authority for political education) in Bonn.

This government body, with the financial backing of the Ministry of the Interior, has prepared 500,000 booklets with relevant information, and short descriptions of the most important books on the subject. These are now being distributed to teachers in history and social sciences across the country. Equally available through the Bundeszentrale on loan are 150 copies of 20 films, full-length features such as *Night and Fog* and many documentaries, including filmed interviews with eyewitnesses of the exterminations.

Finally, in collaboration with WDR, they are preparing a research programme into public reactions to the series. The survey, conducted all over the country, will attempt to evaluate the extent of – and possibly changes in – political attitudes, especially racial prejudice, and will be particularly directed at three groups: school and college students, members of the armed forces, and organisations with known antisemitic tendencies. The results of this inquiry, and an additional survey of 2000 'off the street subjects' in Frankfurt, are intended to become curriculum material for all schools in Germany.

'Of course we realise that all these efforts will lead to people – especially abroad – saying: "Well, *now* they are doing all this",' said educational psychologist Tilman Ernst, who is responsible for the federal programme. 'But all these materials, as most people here know quite well, have always been available and indeed have been used by our schools and colleges for years – decades. What we are doing is *using* this opportunity to widen the scope – to disseminate much further than usual information which is ordinarily mainly used by special interest groups in a higher setting. We are really quite grateful to the Americans for making this film, whatever its drawbacks. The mistakes they made will be just as useful as the emotional reactions this kind of dramatic presentation arouses. We will correct the mistakes,' he said drily, 'and hope that out of emotion will spring curiosity: the desire and the will to learn and to know.'

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London Diary

☐ Under our perfectly democratic system, by which Private Members' Bills are dealt out like raffle prizes, Mr Clement Freud has drawn an opportunity to present his very own new 'Official Secrets Act'. This measure, which has apparently been drafted on the advice of certain 'academic' lawyers, runs to some 42 pages, creates numerous offences on which the Burden of Proof lies on the accused to prove his innocence, and increases penalties in the Magistrates' Courts. It quite fails to provide the much-needed defence of 'public interest', saying nothing about the moral duty which may lie on journalists to report the truth. It also seems that our Attorney-General has told a meeting of Labour MPs that the draconian Section I of the Official Secrets Act will never be confined to spies, so a young reporter may still be put to the hideous anxiety of a trial in which he or she faces a sentence of 30 years imprisonment, and ends up with a conditional discharge. I would like to advise Mr Freud that it is far better to keep laws which are plainly ridiculous (such as the Official Secrets and the Obscene Publications Acts) than to try and rationalise such measures into a machine for creating more injustice more efficiently. Happily the raffle system under which private members are awarded their bills also ensures that very few of them ever become law.

☐ The latest outbreak of McCarthyism, the German witch-hunt for Communist sympathisers, has led to the dreaded 'Berufsverbot' or ban on such people being allowed to work in the West German Public Services. It all began, it seems, with a 'Radikalenerlass' or 'Radicals Decree' issued by Brandt to tighten up loyalty checks on candidates for public jobs. West Germany today is full of aggrieved train drivers, postmen and, for all I know, crossing sweepers fired for their leftist sympathies. *Panorama* last week showed two clearly competent school teachers sacked for their Communist beliefs. Even if, which is denied, there is a case for not trusting Communists with the mail or the 8.30 from Düsseldorf, I have never understood any cause for public alarm in the beliefs of school teachers. In fact, I should have thought the surest way to make any creed unpopular with rising generations is to have their school teachers believe in it. I remember my own school as being staffed by many masters who fanatically believed in virginity before marriage, the character building of rugby football and the sacred infallibility of the British Empire; I never for a moment felt that their expertise in Latin grammar meant that their views on politics, sex or religion were anything but ridiculous. Respectable atheist parents have always put up with teachers' attempts to indoctrinate their children with the silliest sort of Christianity in the sure knowledge that, in the end, reason will prevail. In fact I can think of nothing better calculated to ensure the future of a healthy democracy than a hard corps of Stalinist headmasters, backed up by games mistresses from the National Front.

☐ The recent committal proceedings before the Minehead Justices have led to a great deal of comment on whether such preliminary hearings are necessary, or indeed fair. What is not generally realised is that, although a pre-trial process to see if there is a prima facie case against an accused person is probably desirable, the present law makes such a sifting process a complete sham. Had the Minehead Justices dismissed all the charges (a thing which Justices seldom have the courage to do) Mr Thorpe and his co-accused could still have been prosecuted by means of a Voluntary Bill, and if *some* of the charges had been thrown out they could have been restored by the prosecution at the Old Bailey. Mr Stonehouse left his preliminary hearing at the Magistrates' Court with the amount he was charged as having defrauded reduced to £35,000; but the full £125,000 was restored when the case came to trial. What is needed is a powerful preliminary arbiter, perhaps a High Court Judge, who can, on the application of the Defence, stop the prosecution going to trial on charges which obviously have no foundation. If they are then thrown out they should be thrown out for good.

☐ My daughter has just reached the age when she is tormented by doubt on the subject of Santa Claus. Sunday morning's paper showed a picture of the beaming, bearded Santa who was, in fact, a youth playing the role as part of a sentence of Community Service after being involved in an affray. Rationalist though I am, I don't think I shall tell her.

☐ Since my absence from these shores the BBC has, at huge expense and with enormous technological skill, changed all the wavelengths. The result is that it is virtually impossible to find the music programme; the World Service – the only tolerable source of news since the demise of *The Times* – is also strangely elusive; Radio 4 is greatly taken up with endless shipping forecasts; and the new system is so thoroughly democratic that only those who can afford expensive sets can listen to anything but rubbish. Those in charge of the wireless should be warned: its long held superiority to television may not last forever.

☐ I'm sorry that Edgar Lustgarten should have died at 71. Sorry that any barrister who scratches for a living with his pen should hand in his chips at the festive season: but Lustgarten's particular way of writing about crime and criminals was really killed off by the abolition of the death penalty. 'You could have heard a pin drop in the Court' was a typical Lustgarten line, 'as the great Rufus Isaacs leant forward to ask the final, deadly question, and already the shadow of the rope was about Jones's neck as he answered with his usual fatal "check".' What Lustgarten never told us was that when Isaacs asked his fatal questions he had probably lost his place in the depositions, the Clerk of the Court was whispering to the Usher, two schoolgirls in the public gallery were enjoying a giggle, the Judge had fallen into a light doze and the Jury were wondering when the hell it would be time for tea. Lustgarten's pieces always ended with 'On the wet, windy morning of 12 January 1927 at Wandsworth Prison, Frederick Gilray Jones paid his final debt to society.' Some nostalgic old barristers regret the fact that murders are, as they say, now conducted in a holiday atmosphere: but somehow the penalty of life imprisonment took all the glamour out of the Lustgarten prose, and marked the end of Agatha Christie's best writing (Poirot's fascination depends largely on the gallows of which he was, of course, a strong supporter). Speaking for myself I can do without the glamour of the 'Notable British Trials' series if it means an end to the legalised obscenity of wet January mornings at Wandsworth.

☐ The prize-giving of the West End Theatre Managers was, on the whole, a jolly occasion; although I always remember Frankie Howerd saying that the best performances of any year were always given by actors applauding other actors getting an award. During some part of the proceedings I fell to thinking of other annual prizes that should be given and of their recipients this year. The Talleyrand Memorial Medal for survival would no doubt go to Mr Callaghan, and the Cleopatra Inconsistency Bracelet to Mrs Thatcher for her support of the Ford strikers. I would give the King John Award for the Undermining of Magna Carta to Metropolitan Police Commissioner McNee. The John Junor Most Irritating Journalist of the Year Award would go to Mr Ronald Butt of *The Times* (soon may he return to be the salt in my breakfast egg) and the Bath Cube Manufacturers' Least Welcome Christmas Present Prize would have to be divided between *Watership Down* and *The Tolkien Omnibus*. As usual the Enid Blyton Award for the discouragement of serious literature would go to those in charge of the Booker Prize. Finally the Barnum Carnival Novelty Practical Joker of the Year Award could only go to God for his extraordinary behaviour in first blessing the election, and then decreeing the immediate demise of Pope John Paul I.

During the coming festive season other awards and prize-givings could perhaps be considered. Well, it's better than Monopoly.

☐ The Common Market has something to be said for it at last. I travelled from Bangkok to take up my next professional engagement in a European city, a place with which I am unfamiliar, so I took a leaflet from the hotel porter. The map was usefully entitled *Ou aller? Ce qu'on peut voir* and on the opposite page I read the mouthwatering headline *Une ville internationale spectaculaire . . .jour et nuit* and it went on to speak of *Une ville moderne et vivant dont les immeubles, les magasins and les boites de nuit sont parmis les meilleurs.* Where was I? Nice? Cannes perhaps, or Milan? I was half way round 'Le Bullring' before I recognised Birmingham.

John Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Some Citizens Band radio promoters claim the British government is attempting to squelch freedom of communication. 'I think we have to consider the enormous disadvantages of having a vast army of people who can communicate with one another easily,' said Lord Peter Wells-Pestel, speaking for the Home Office. – *Montreal Gazette* (Howard Fink)

☐ Frozen turkeys, clearly suitable for early buying, now cost from about 48p to 54p a pound, but some people are reported to be buying fresh turkeys at up to 75p a pound for hens, to put in the freezer. – *Daily Telegraph* (Diane Barnes)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

The editors' shares

Sir, Bruce Page's article last week was a classic smear. He sought to imply that I had been engaged in 'insider trading'. This is a lie. He suggested by innuendo, that I have two standards about disclosure and accountability. This is false and he knows it. When he telephoned me I offered to seek out anything he wanted to know. He did not take up the invitation. He did not quote me accurately or at all where that would have gone against the grain of his piece; nor did he put to me the insider trading scheme or 'share dealing' he was about to headline.

The facts: I hold 18,900 Thomson shares, which anyone who examines the records at the relevant period will be able to discover. They are, as it happens, worth several pence less than when I was invited to become a member of a not untypical company share option plan in January, 1978. I cannot divest myself of this holding for ten years; if and when I do I must repay the loan, and, of course, capital tax on any appreciation there may or may not be. I draw no dividends. I took advice from leading City solicitors – as I told Page – that the plan was lawful and proper and met all the legal and moral obligations as to taxation and disclosure. The holding will, of course, be itemised in the annual accounts of the Company.

One would need an article as long as the original to document all the techniques of insupportable innuendo. Thus Page lays a trail of mud and, towards the end of a dense article says – surprise, surprise – that 'one must emphasise' that Harold Evans and William Rees-Mogg could not have had inside knowledge. As the *Guardian* City Page said on Friday, the allegation of insider trading is shot through with holes. The whole article is stitched together with weasel words – in effect, apparently, in principle, it seems, etc.

More than anything I despise Page's attempt to link all this with the grievous suspension of publication of the *Sunday Times,* which was, in fact, mooted only months later in April as losses of the paper accelerated. Page, a former staff member, kicks us when we're down: this is the second long article in the NEW STATESMAN in this crisis calculated to aggravate our difficulties.

He wouldn't, would he, use the NEW STATESMAN for some personal vendetta? Or is that an innuendo? And, perhaps, in the interests of disclosure, he will tell readers of the NEW STATESMAN the capital sum he took with him from Times Newspapers?

HAROLD EVANS
Editor

The Sunday Times,
200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1

Sir, I write as President of Thomson Equitable Corporation Limited, the Thomson family company you referred to. I have no interest myself, indirect or otherwise, in the shares you refer to.

Your article does great injustice, not least to Mr. William Rees-Mogg, Editor of *The Times*, and Mr. Harold Evans, Editor of the *Sunday Times*. I hope you will permit me a right of reply in your colums and while I will confine myself to what I see as some of the salient points, it would be wrong to assume that I agree with the remainder of your article.

First, the management of Times Newspapers Limited, one of our subsidiaries, were not 'rewarding themselves'. They were invited, in common with directors and other senior executives in the Thomson group as a whole, to acquire an indirect equity interest in this group. This was made possible by the Thomson family, who own some 80% of this group. I note that you do not oppose the principle of share ownership by employees, which is long established and has the general support of the Government and the Stock Exchange.

Secondly, it is hard to see how you can describe the share interests in question as 'secret', when virtually every point in your article is based on information taken on your behalf from registers open to public inspection and placed there by the company notwithstanding that these indirect interests were neither registerable nor disclosable under the provisions of the relevant statutes.

Thirdly, again in your headline, you refer to 'Times Newspapers and the rules of insider trading'. No one in Times Newspapers, whether the editors or otherwise, was concerned with the mechanics or timing of the acquisition of such shares. Your front page reference to 'Share dealing by the editors' is therefore completely inaccurate and it is extremely unfair to them to suggest that they could have been even peripherally involved in any impropriety.

Fourthly, there was no insider trading. The plain facts are that these proposals were devised on behalf of the Thomson family and the acquisition of the shares in question was deliberately deferred until after the preliminary announcement of our year end results for 1977 specifically to ensure that the 'insider trading' rules were not infringed. When that embargoed period was over, brokers were instructed to acquire the necessary shares at a timing of their choice, subject only to not continuing into any other period when an embargo on dealing would apply.

At the time the shares in question were being acquired, the likelihood of an announcement concerning the proposals that were put before shareholders had not, in the words of the Stock Exchange's Model Code, 'become a reasonable probability'. This view is based on my knowledge of the stage which had then been reached in the consideration of a possible re-organisation and is wholly supported by our merchant bankers and brokers.

This group has always complied with the provisions of the Stock Exchange Model Code on transactions in securities and indeed in some respects goes further.

J. A. TORY, QC

Toronto

Bruce Page writes: Mr Evans reports incorrectly the conversation I had with him last week, and overlooks the details of the article which angers him. I of course did put to him the points about 'insider trading': it was precisely because he told me he did not know the timing of share-purchases made on his behalf that I stated, early in the article and at the end, that he did not know what went on. In such a situation, though, I think an editor should know what is being done in his name. It is also a pity to see the editor of the *Sunday Times* joining the Thomson management in what is at best a narrow and legalistic view about disclosure. Let me assure both Mr Tory and Mr Evans that to deduce what was going on from the publicly-available material was no easy matter. The whole business should surely have been declared as frankly as possible, and a suitable place would have been the International Thomson offer document (among others).

Mr Evans' account of the timing, in relation to the closure of Times Newspapers, is open to challenge. Closure, we have been told by Thomson chairman Gordon Brunton, was a serious option long before January. And in any case the shares were being bought, had Mr Evans known it, as late as June – when closure was a public threat. I am surprised that Mr Evans should regard the scheme as 'not untypical', when it has such unusual features as the absence of any formal need for disclosure. But this accords with several of his remarks last week, some of which seemed to be made without reflection. For instance, he said that he saw no possibility of any conflict of interest: a puzzling statement, which relates to his present plea that he must retain the holding for ten years. To some people it might not seem at all right that Thomson's should make money available so that their editors may benefit through the shares of a company heavily involved in North Sea oil. But if done at all, the attachment of strings does not improve matters. If Thomson shares were to appreciate on the strength of public debate about the company's prospects of winning new North Sea exploration licences, Mr Evans as editor of the *Sunday Times*, could be placed in a very unhappy position.

The NEW STATESMAN has indeed been critical of Times Newspapers management, but it is criticism based on honest inquiry. In the interests of free speech, we've chosen to publish Mr Evans' incorrect suggestion that a 'vendetta' is being conducted – though it is a pity he should react in quite such personal terms. The article was not different in stance from a good many which have been published in the *Sunday Times*. (Incidentally, I can show that I have never made any secret of the amount I received on leaving Times Newspapers: it was £17,500 for 12 years' service, much of it in senior positions, covering pension rights, payment under a voluntary-redundancy scheme, and an amount in recognition of various books which I produced on Times Newspapers' behalf.)

To Mr Tory I reply in the same terms as to the *Guardian*: to many people it would seem that the International Thomson plan became 'probable', in terms of management intention, once arrangements had been made to finance the foreign-currency transactions necessary to carry it through.

Answers to racism

Sir, One *fact* about the Anti-Nazi League cannot in honesty be gainsaid: until it appeared on the scene there was no organised attempt to beat the fascists at their own game. It is a little disingenuous of non-racist pillars of the Establishment now to cry 'But we've been fighting the Nazis all the time', when the sum total of their effectiveness has been nil.

The smell of sour grapes is everywhere now that young people are *seen* actively to be taking part wherever they can be most obviously effective in the taming of the fascist bully-boys. If Enoch Powell has been allowed for ten years to get away with the monstrous incitement to hatred which he demonstrably has, we non-whites know precisely why; that is also precisely why we look around at the teenagers with their ANL badges and we are *glad*, glad because someone has had the guts to rub the noses of the political establishment in the mud of their hypocrisy.

Turning the other cheek is beautiful – for those who will never be called upon to do it. That is why I'd rather, with Paul Foot, be prepared for violence however much I abhor it and hope it won't be needed. Having at all to think of violence in this context is a further mark of the ineptitude of those who could have done more to prevent its spread. If I were a Bangladeshi in the East End. I know whom I'd prefer to have on my side when the NF marched.

RASHID KARAPIET

34 St Michael's Place
Brighton

Trendy barbarians

Sir, It is sad to see the NEW STATESMAN succumbing to the New Brutalism: sans serif type, reversed headings, thick rules and inky blobs. OK for the front half, perhaps, in keeping with the sombre politico-socio-economic world it deals with – but I was dismayed to see in the current issue that the Black Hand has now reached out to grip Arthur Marshall by the throat. Is nothing and nobody sacred? This denial of our classic typographical heritage is unforgivable in the back half of your journal, where we instinctively expect traditional standards of presentation to be upheld. I hope the Republic of Letters will make no further concessions to the trendy barbarians in the layout department. At least I shall expect the Comp Complex to go down fighting.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

20 Kilmington Way
Christchurch, Dorset

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Scribble scribble

In the past I have been, and to my own sad cost and deprivation, far too trusting over the friendly lending both of books and of gramophone records. They tend to disappear. Copies of the books are usually, after endless time and expense and ferreting about, recoverable from other and second-hand sources. Not so with most of the gramophone records that are missing and here I am of course referring to the best type of all, the dear old 78s that daily ring out so melodiously in the spacious living-rooms of 'Myrtlebank'. Here the range of second-hand availabilities is very limited indeed and it would be a waste of my time to try to run to earth a long since vanished treasure, a pleasing music-hall song (can it have been sung by the splendid Randolph Sutton?) whose verse began with the striking words 'I'm coming o'er the ocean, a little girl to see. There'll be a great commotion, for her to marry me'. The first line of the tremendously jolly chorus went 'Mary, sweet and fascinating little fairy'. This is just the kind of lyric I like best, with delightful rhymes and the story-line perfectly clear – a love-sick swain explains that he is arriving by sea (he apologises later for his tardiness) to wed, in a rather showy manner, he hints, the blue-eyed (yes, they're mentioned too) girl of his choice. What could be poetically better?

To all of us there comes a moment in life when it is time to cast aside the mask and reveal oneself, naked and ashamed, for what one is and I have to tell you, with enormous regret (for the loss is mine), that I don't really very much care for the plays of Shakespeare when performed in their entirety. Small isolated chunks of the Bard are fine, but not large chunks amalgamated into a three hour whole. His knowledge of human nature takes one's breath away but one can't be breathless for three hours at a stretch without seriously undermining health. And there are other disadvantages. I get very fidgety after the eighth 'By my troth,' and 'go to, go to,' and 'Marry, come up, I trow.' I think that the subject was damaged for me by not very enthusiastic teaching at school. The copies of the plays that were doled out to us were always abridged editions, and one hoped that this meant that quite a bit of the text had been removed, but it merely indicated that some latter-day professorial Bowdler had snipped out all the nasty bits (Ophelia's saucy song, for example) and left us free to press purely on. It was the same thing in frog. When we did the *contes choisis* of Maupassant, it was from an *édition pour la jeunesse* and a puritanical hand had *choisi* only the relatively innocent stories. We didn't get to *Boule de Suif* until later in life and under our own steam and when, presumably, dirt didn't matter so much.

I am all for the plays of Shakespeare being very thoroughly abridged, if not actually altered. I have several suggestions to make. Take *Macbeth*, for instance. Let us have, by all means, the first four scenes as they are, but what about a nice variation when we arrive at Inverness in Act I Scene V and Lady Macbeth enters reading the letter from Macbeth that brings out her very worst side? Instead, why not let her be 'discovered', an early victim of postal delays, at the front door and cross-questioning that extremely tiresome old hall porter about the postman. Has he come? 'He hath come and gone, good madam', the porter replies. 'Wast there then naught for me?' asks Lady Macbeth, looking wistful. 'Naught, sweet lady', he answers, which she swiftly counters with 'Tis a naughty naught.' The porter then attempts to cheer her up with one of those fearfully complicated and unfunny Shakespearean smutty jokes. 'Methinks a postman be like an inconsiderate and hasty lover who visiteth his mistress in her bedchamber and findeth her in riggish and unbuttoned mood.' Lady Macbeth, anxious to give the thing a kick, asks 'How so, varlet?' 'Why, marry, he too doth unbutton and, like this our postman, comes, and then goes too'. Lady Macbeth, never short of a quip, screeches, 'Go to yourself, knave' and the pair of them then collapse into those wild and maniacal shrieks of laughter that play directors find convenient for deadening, so to speak, the deafening silence in the audience. Then Lady Macbeth wanders off to the kitchen to supervise her breakfast and prod the baps and, her mind on domestic matters, all that little bother with Duncan is avoided.

King Lear would greatly benefit from quite an elaborate shortening and this is easily achieved as early as Act I Scene I when the poor old boy, not yet completely cracked, shuffles in to the 'Room of State', takes a pew and, after some preliminaries, says 'Know that we have divided in three our kingdom.' How very much better if he mooched about a bit, took a long hard look at Goneril and Regan (two obviously odious girls, both smirking away like anything and with 'troublemaker' written all over them) and then plonked himself down and said Know that we have decided not to divide in three our kingdom.' After which he kisses Cordelia and we can all get up and go home. *The Merchant of Venice* presents no problems at all. The caskets provide excellent abridgement possibilities. In Act II the dusky Prince of Morocco, no fool, promptly chooses the leaden casket and instantly whisks a delighted Portia, thrilled to be a Princess, away from dreary old Belmont to a life of luxurious ease in Marrakesh, with asses' milk baths, whole roast sheep for dinner, and banana custard simply *ad lib*.

Is not Shakespeare, you ask, turning in his grave? I much doubt it. Far too sensible a man to mind, surely. And anyhow, and strange though it may seem, such cavalier and impertinent treatment of their work was just what authors, to a rather less exaggerated degree than I have been guilty of, had to put up with until well into this century. Their difficulties and complaints, their inability to band themselves militantly together against such practices as piracy, illegal editions and adaptations, and their feeble and dilatory rallying to the copyright cause are the subject of Victor Bonham-Carter's excellent book *Authors By Profession* (The Society of Authors, £5.95), a splendid survey of this most chancy way of earning a living and which ranges from the introduction of printing to the Copyright Act of 1911.

'Writing is *par excellence*', Mr Bonham-Carter correctly judges, 'our national art' (30,000 titles are published annually in Britain alone, to the great confusion, not to say dismay, of literary editors) and fairly scurvily have writers been treated down the years. *Paradise Lost* earned its author the princely sum of £18. Jane Austen, unable to place her first book, which was called *Pride and Prejudice*, sold *Northanger Abbey* for £10 to a Bath publisher, who then got cold feet and demanded the £10 back. In Grubb Street, which positively existed, and near Moorfields, hacks scratched away in garrets at starvation rates and slept three to a bed. Swift, Fielding and Trollope could only live by being gainfully occupied in other capacities. Keats, as we know, was a hospital dresser and Wordsworth held the unusual post of 'distributor of stamps for the county of Westmorland'. As Isaac d'Israeli, who, in addition to fathering the statesman, moved in literary circles, wrote in his *Calamities of Authors*, 'Authors continue poor, and Booksellers become opulent; an extraordinary result.' There would be some who claim that the position is not so very different today.

Success has, on the other hand, brought rewards sometimes somewhat in excess of what is justified. Tennyson refused an offer of £20,000 for a lecture tour in the USA, and why bother when he could get £700 for a single poem in the magazine *Good Words*, and £1,000 for a three-stanza one from the lectureless USA? Another high earner was Henry James. How delightful to find him, in 1888, taking 20 pages in which to decline a dinner invitation in honour of American authors, coupled with a vehement attempt to dissuade the kind hosts from having a dinner at all.

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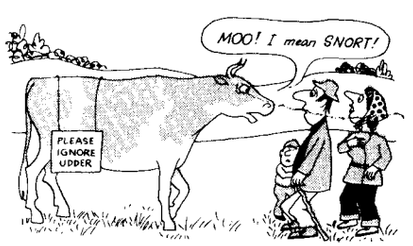

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EXCLUSIVE!

New Statesman editor in pay of British security services

Clifford Sharp

CLIFFORD SHARP, the first editor of the NEW STATESMAN, was recruited by the British security services shortly after the Russian Revolution. Their objective was to manipulate his magazine and use it as part of the propaganda war on Bolshevism.

This piquant fact emerges from a study of Public Record Office files dealing with the period immediately after the First World War. Although many details remain sketchy, it does appear to constitute the first known example of the state attempting peacetime manipulation of an 'independent' press for purposes of covert propaganda. The Cold War achievement of the CIA in funding magazines like *Encounter* through the Congress of Cultural Freedom remains impressive but now seems less original. It appears that this technique, like most of the others in the CIA's comprehensive bag of dirty tricks, was first patented in Britain.

Sharp's progression into the secret world seemed innocuous enough. After the magazine was started in 1913 he worked closely with its two founders Sidney and Beatrice Webb. In March 1917 the Webbs failed to secure their editor's exemption from conscription, and for four months he trained as an artillery officer. Sharp's temporary successor was the literary editor, Jack Squire, and few of the 5,000 readers suspected any change.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1917 the War Office 'demobbed' Sharp and posted him to Sweden where he busied himself assessing public opinion and meeting continental socialists. His 'cover' was that of a freelance journalist. Beatrice Webb noted in her diary that he was considered an ideal intelligence agent for a neutral capital, thanks mainly to his reputation as the editor of Britain's 'most intellectual socialist weekly'. For nearly two years Sharp was officially responsible, as head of the wartime information service, to the British ambassador in Stockholm, Sir Esme Howard. A conscientious observer of the Swedish press, Sharp remained a valued source of information, even after Howard was recalled to the Foreign Office. He was also working closely with the director of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) in northern Europe, a Major 'S'.

Among the journalists Sharp had dealings with in Stockholm was the *Daily News* correspondent Arthur Ransome (later the best-selling author of *Swallows and Amazons*). Ransome was at the time a confidant of Lenin, a close friend of Karl Radek and the fiance of one of Trotsky's secretaries, whom he later married. Sections of the British security services erroneously suspected him of being a 'Bolshevik agent'. In the summer of 1918 he came to Stockholm after a long stint in Petrograd. He was unsure whether to stay on and sacrifice his close relations with the Bolsheviks, or go to Moscow and risk the personal consequences of Britain formally declaring war on Russia. At that time it seemed as if Britain's interventionist policy might lead in that direction.

Leaving the final decision to the Foreign Office Ransome consulted Sharp who, after telegraphing for instructions, advised Ransome to go. It was through Sharp, rather than a regular embassy official, that Ransome secured the Foreign Office's approval. Documents in the PRO, although incomplete, suggest that Sharp was effectively employed in Stockholm by both the SIS and the Political Intelligence Department (PID) of the Foreign Office.

THE PID HAD a short but intriguing history. Established by the Lloyd George coalition government of December 1916 to ascertain

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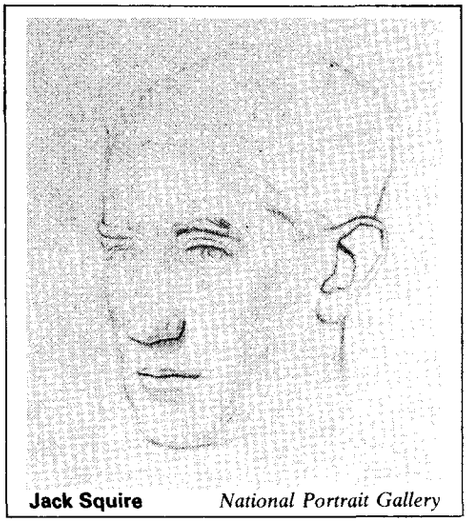
the state of public opinion abroad, the PID (then known as the Political Intelligence Division) was originally under the direction of Colonel John Buchan at the Department of Information. In 1933 a semi-official volume, *The Foreign Office*, suggested that the bureau merely recorded 'the rapidly changing conditions of foreign countries both from the Press and from official reports . . .' By the summer of 1918, however, the PID was engaged in a sophisticated programme of intelligence gathering, foreign policy formulation, and covert propaganda more suitable to the intellectual talents of its specially recruited staff.

From Balliol came Arnold Toynbee, Hamish Paton and, via the ranks of the Royal Fusiliers, Lewis Namier. Namier, presumably with the tacit permission of his masters, provided anonymous political analyses for the NEW STATESMAN. As an undergraduate his mentor had been Alfred Zimmern, historian and author of *The Greek Commonwealth*. Before being recruited to the PID Zimmern had worked as a Board of Education Inspector with another classicist, James Headlam (later Headlam-Morley). Headlam was transferred to propaganda work in August 1914 and eventually took charge of PID's day-to-day affairs and headed its most important section, Germany.

In February 1918 Headlam's team became the responsibility of Lord Beaverbrook, the proprietor of the *Daily Express* and newly-appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the first Minister of Information. Within a month Headlam and his colleagues were refusing to serve under Beaverbrook, and the entire intelligence bureau deserted to the Foreign Office. Beaverbrook complained to Lord Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, that civil servants were forbidden to make an inter-departmental transfer without the consent of their original chief. Hardinge's Olympian reply was that these were not civil servants but 'independent experts voluntarily serving the country in war-time'.

THE RENAMED Political Intelligence Department was swiftly assimilated into the administrative structure of Whitehall and given a new chief, Assistant Under-Secretary William Tyrell. In eight years as principal private secretary to Asquith's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, Tyrell had established a reputation as an ambitious and capable career diplomat. (He later became Permanent Under-Secretary.) Tyrell was enthusiastic about the talents of his new team. He respected both their skill in gathering intelligence, at home and in the field, and the conclusions deduced from its analysis. The official post-war history of the Foreign Office noted the PID's unique reputation while implying that the bureau was terminated with the Armistice ending hostilities in November 1918. This impression was later reinforced by Stephen Gaselee, the Foreign Office's librarian and former wartime liaison with Buchan and then Beaverbrook. In *The Foreign Office*, 1933, he claimed the PID was swiftly disbanded and its personnel either released from duty or absorbed into a reconstituted News Department releasing only 'objective' information in close co-operation with both British and foreign journalists. He wrote: 'Neither the British Government nor the British people had ever regarded propaganda as other than a regrettable and wasteful expedient . . .'



Jack Squire *National Portrait Gallery*

The PRO's files of anti-Bolshevik activities after the Armistice now reveal the hollowness of Gaselee's reassurance to his readers. Yet clearly there was agreement among official historians and archivists to ignore the postwar activities of the PID and similar bodies. In a sense these activities were an extension of earlier strategies to combat what was deemed the Red Menace. Long before the Armistice, the PID, the SIS, and the service intelligence agencies, were active in Europe complementing Home Office measures to counter any hint of domestic subversion.

Clifford Sharp remained a member of the PID fraternity after the war.

ON 3 DECEMBER, 1918 Tyrell circulated a memorandum proposing a visit to Finland by Clifford Sharp. The emergence of a powerful Marxist faction in Berlin had convinced the PID chief of the urgent need to counteract a false impression of Bolshevik efficiency increasingly cultivated by the more sympathetic organs of the British press. 'The best antidote' he argued 'is simply an accurate and remorseless exposure of the failure of Bolshevism as a practical business and its depressing effect on the life of the working man living under it'.

Sources holding the confidence of the British working class were to supply detailed information confirming that the system adopted in Russia ran counter to the traditional liberties of both the TUC and its individual members. The NEW STATESMAN was deemed such a source. From Helsingfors, the Finnish capital, Sharp was to despatch a series of articles on Bolshevism to his paper. Tyrell listed 14 specific areas of enquiry which the SIS in Stockholm were to point out to Sharp. These instructions ranged from the organisation and depth of support for the Soviet army, to the distribution of food and the rights of married women.

Sidney Webb was evidently in sympathy with these propaganda objectives. A month earlier he had told Robert Bruce Lockhart over lunch that Lenin knew nothing about economics and that Bolshevism was bound to fail economically. Lockhart had previously headed a mission on behalf of Lloyd George designed to establish unofficial relations with the new Russian regime. The mission had ended ingloriously with the incarceration of his party in the Lubianka while Lockhart was denounced in *Pravda* as the head of an Allied conspiracy against Lenin. Details of this murky episode are still unclear though Lockhart acted as paymaster for Sidney Reilly, the British super spy in Petrograd, who successfully evaded arrest following the Left Social Revolutionaries' attempt on Lenin's life on 30 August 1918. Lockhart and his party were eventually exchanged for Litvinov and expelled to Sweden. Regrettably, restricted access to Lockhart's diaries means that any meeting with Clifford Sharp in Sweden, while probable, cannot be confirmed.

IN LONDON, Sidney Webb and Lockhart discovered that they shared some common perspectives on the new Russian regime (Sidney and Beatrice's uncritical championship of Soviet Communism did not emerge until after Stalin took over). In a rare leading article, published on 7 December 1918, Sidney Webb informed readers of the NEW STATESMAN that Lenin's policies were doomed and inveighed against the Bolshevik reign of terror.

On 19 December, less than two weeks after the appearance of Webb's article, Sir Esmé Howard, the British Ambassador in Sweden, was informed that Sidney Webb had approved the use of the NEW STATESMAN for the propaganda purposes outlined in Tyrell's memorandum. Sharp himself was apparently disappointed with the posting to Helsingfors. The PRO records show that some Foreign Office officials unsuccessfully pointed out to Tyrell that Sharp would have preferred Berlin where 'he *would* be of considerable use'.

In the long run, however, it was Sharp's Foreign Office masters who were most disappointed. Sharp returned to full-time editorship of the NEW STATESMAN in March 1919 and underlined the conciliatory tone on Russian affairs that had been maintained by Jack Squire in his absence. While the FO had been able to control his movements, Sharp evidently kept firm control of his own mind.

One direct consequence of his Helsingfors expedition was an account of White atrocities in Finland, published to counter the one-sided impression given by a recent book exposing Bolshevik injustices. He castigated sections of the British press, especially *The Times* and *The Morning Post*, for printing 'hysterical nonsense' about Lenin's government. Sharp's call for tacit recognition and a fresh initiative by Lloyd George continued into early 1920 when the NEW STATESMAN applauded 'the most democratic government' in Russia's history. Bolshevism might be stern, cruel, and inefficient as Tsarist tyranny, but for Sharp it remained 'a prelude to freedom'. On 17 January, 1920, he wrote, with what now seems like an insider's knowledge, 'If there is anything stranger than the illusion that the Soviet Government could be overthrown by the plausible misrepresentation in the English Press, it is the illusion that the British Empire in Asia may be destroyed by the dissemination therein of Bolshevik propaganda'.

Sharp evidently came to regret his flirtation with the security services and his increasingly heavy drinking may have been the symptom of a deep unease. In 1924 when the first Labour Government was annihilated at the polls after a vituperative Red Scare campaign, Sharp castigated the intelligence agencies as 'indiscriminately credulous' for their role in 'authenticating' the Zinoviev letter, a notorious forgery, and releasing it to the Press. Three years later he called for 'drastic reform' of the SIS, including the suspension in peacetime of its political activities.

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Robert Conquest

'Lady Chatterley's Lover' in the light of Dürfian Psychology

Psychoanalysis, and the thinking deriving from it, may often seem to be of doubtful assistance in the consideration of literature. Even when apparently apt, it will often be found that the insights are of a very partial nature which there is a natural – even if unnecessary – tendency to give greater weight to than they deserve: in many cases, to the extent that they masquerade as *complete* assessments. No doubt such a criticism is to some degree applicable to Ludwig Dürf's treatment of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Yet that book is, as is generally recognised, so single-minded and even obsessional, that such an objection must carry far less weight than usual.

Dr Dürf's was one of those cases, not uncommon in the sciences, where for various accidental and extraneous reasons a significant advance remains largely unrecognised until it has gradually become pervasive as a truism. It is perhaps stranger that this should be the case when there is an overlap into the sphere of literary criticism. But it is my experience that critics, while tending to a vaguely Dürfian attitude, dismiss a direct statement of it as either extravagant or otiose. It therefore seems appropriate to go back to the explicit case he made in his original paper, which may still – if only for its clarity – be instructive to modern students of literature.

It has been well said that Freudian psychology is generally speaking true as a special case within the broader generalisation of Dürfian theory. In particular, the Freudian view of symbolism is based on the idea that sexual attitudes and desires are likely to be repressed, and to manifest themselves under the guise of different physical objects and phenomena, bearing some resemblance to or having some link with the original. Dr Dürf was able to show that this was too parochial a view. In late-19th-century Vienna, and to a varying degree elsewhere, the sexual side of life was indeed that most likely to be affected by repression. However, this did not apply everywhere or to everyone. It would be natural enough in the 1970s, for example, that a subject might feel no guilt about sex, but be very concerned to repress (for example) racial prejudice.

This may appear obvious now, but it is much to Dürf's credit that he saw it as early as the late 1920s. Hitherto psychoanalytically orthodox, he seems to have wrestled with the problem of fitting *Lady Chatterley's Lover* into the Freudian scheme, finally concluding that Lawrence had indeed freed himself from the mechanisms of sexual repression and would have to be treated under a different view.

Dürf's death in the early Thirties, his (often reported) lack of personal magnetism, and, above all, the publication of his paper in the obscure (and non-psychological) *Acta Linguistica Cracoviensia* (Vol. LXXXIV, pp.407-87) prevented general recognition of his innovative insight – at least until so late that it no longer appeared remarkable. He left no 'school'. His failure, moreover, to erect his profound intuitions into a formally expressed general theory, left the Freudians and post-Freudians in effective possession of the field.

To put it without Dürf's rather complex antinomies, he came to the conclusion that Lawrence, lacking sexual repression, was repressing some other desire (as, on the Dürfian view, every human being to some degree must). At any rate, his puzzlement over the psychoanalytically refractory material of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* led him one morning, in his Bratislava clinic, to one of those thoughts which carry the simplicity of genius: Freud had painstakingly shown that, among the sexually repressed, dreams and symbols of flying represented, in a very detailed fashion, the sexual. But if the link was well established (Dürf argued), might not overt, sexual imagery represent (among the sexually unrepressed) a repressed wish to be an airman – a desire which, in Lawrence's case, was clearly at odds with his whole 'posture' in life, and

'. . . Freud had painstakingly shown that, among the sexually repressed, dreams and symbols of flying represented . . . the sexual. But if the link was well established (Dürf argued), might not overt, sexual imagery represent (among the sexually unrepressed) a repressed wish to be an airman . . .?'

subversive of his ego-position, such a conflict being characteristic of the whole Dürfian mechanism?

As soon as he had tentatively formulated the idea, the evidence started to fall into place and showed itself to be overwhelming. Dürf tells us that his first clue came in 'A Propos Lady Chatterley's Lover'. Lawrence, insisting that sex should remain 'earthy', significantly and emphatically stated his aim as stopping it being lifted 'to a higher *plane*'. As Dürf saw at once, this almost brought to consciousness, riskily trod on the very edge of making explicit, Lawrence's real theme, just when – significantly enough – he is asserting (and over-asserting) the total unconnectedness of the sexual and the aerial. Usually he better maintains the disguises of feelings deeply rooted in the various ways, including that of family relations, to which Dürf next turned.

In dealing with Lawrence's attitude to the von Richtofens, in particular his cousinhood by marriage with the German ace, Dürf is convincing enough in principle, but seems a little too dogmatically involved with his own special view, derived from his earlier work, of a particularly powerfully charged network of tensions held to be invariably existing between a man and his wife's family (or a wife and her husband's family) in all its manifestations*. This does not seem too inappropriate in Lawrence's case, but as a general thesis it would still seem to require stronger support than Dürf was ever able to find. Nevertheless, where such feelings are generated, as with Lawrence, they are certainly very powerful and we can be sure that the Red Baron (who even painted the fuselage of his aircraft that significant colour) was a powerful and disturbing element in Lawrence's psychological ecosphere.

*The so-called Phaedra Complex.

Readers of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* cannot fail to notice the – on the face of it – inordinately large number of uses of the imagery of flames. In four successive paragraphs (pp. 258-9 of the Penguin edition) we find 'searing as fire', 'sensual flame', 'burn out', 'the fire', 'the sensual fire'. At moments of extreme 'passion' Lawrence is unable (as Dürf points out) to avoid the most extreme experience of the pilot, being 'shot down in flames' – like his von Richtofen 'cousin', whose fate can never have been far from his thoughts.

Dürf notes too, in a similar context, the very significant (yet strangely neglected) passage in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which Lawrence attacks his namesake, T. E. Lawrence, under the faint disguise 'Colonel C. E. Florence' for 'unsatisfactory mysticism', 'too much advertisement behind all the humility', and so forth. As has long been shown in classical psychoanalysis, there is bound to be a sort of identification at the subconscious level, however reluctant and horrified, between those of the same name. It is thus natural enough for Lawrence (D. H.) to have had a particularly personal hatred of T. E. – and to project on him, in a sense, what may be thought to be a description *mutatis mutandis* of his own faults. It is hard to resist the conclusion that it was T. E. Lawrence's joining the Air Force (repeating in a much smaller way with a namesake the challenge earlier felt from a relative-by-marriage) which brought this to such an intensity that it had to be incorporated publicly into a novel – and the very novel with the unconscious theme we are examining.

But beyond that, there were endless reminders connecting him with the sphere, which he had to endure. For example, the series of 'DH' aircraft, famous both during the war and after it, was a direct blow at his unconscious. Wherever he turned, Lawrence would find reminders of one sphere in the other. Even proper names in the sky seem projected there from the sexual: Ball, Britain's leading ace; the Fokker aeroplane. And then: the joystick, both in physical form and verbally. The tail – one of Mellors's terms for the buttocks. The undercarriage; hangars; airscrew; take off; touchdown; connecting rod; wind-tunnel. In the 'first' *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie is even, through a build-up thoroughly implausible at the overt level, brought to utter the discrete shout, 'Contact!'

As Dürf points out (though this of course is by no means an original point in psychological literature), for some the *verbal* parallels and resonances are more powerful than the visual ones: writers, like Lawrence, are naturally in this category. Lawrence would also have

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known the much anthologised airman's song, in which the parts of the engine are inextricably mixed, after a crash, with the human body: 'take the camshaft from out of my kidneys' cannot but recall, moreover, the popular expression 'kidney-wiper'.

While Freud has the airship as a symbol of the phallus, Dürf – in this particular case – naturally reverses the direction of the symbolising ('Symbolvektor', as he terms it). He notes in passing the striking relevance of the dispute between advocates of rigid and non-rigid airships. But his most interesting contribution is likely to remain controversial – indeed he himself does not advance it with any great certainty. He notes that (apart from the rather affect-less 'tail') the buttocks seem to play little part in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in symbolising the repressed world of the sky. And he makes the interesting suggestion that 'arse' – used more commonly than 'tail' by Mellors – symbolises, in Lawrence's verbal way, the two giant airships the R-100 and the R-101 – the two 'Rs' – then being completed. It is true that phallus and airship are the two objects traditionally associated in psychoanalysis. Yet in Lawrence's case, the phallus is so taken up with representing the aeroplane, with its impulsive thrust, that the slower and milder airship, with its broad, curving expanses, may seem to be unrepresented. Each 'R' thus appears as one buttock: and though in reality they would scarcely have been laid side by side, the bizarre logic of the unconscious is perfectly capable on any view of projecting the two as a single 'Rs'.

To the layman this may seem to be verging on the absurd: yet concepts not too dissimilar have often turned out, after further study and evidence, to be cogent, and more than cogent. At any rate the suggestion is entirely in accord with Lawrence's general attitude. Nor is it possible to dismiss the famous – and in the overt context pointless and arbitrary – daisy-chain. Of course, the chain-drive had long been obsolete when Lawrence wrote, but he would certainly have seen photographs of the early aeroplanes. (He might, in fact, even have preferred them, just as there is a definite psychological category of men today with a special taste for Victorian erotic photographs, a point on which Dürf provides an illuminating footnote.)

While we have no reason to believe that Lawrence had any books on aviation (his sort of 'pornography'), we can certainly imagine the occasional accidental or furtive glance at the then edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*'s article on 'Aeronautics', where he would have seen a clear illustration of the Wright chain-drive biplane; and browsed on such passages as 'we pass from root to tip in such a way that the angle of attack ... is greater at the root than at the tip and thus we arrive at the ... screws in common use'. It is also full of such terms as 'finding the vertical'. A long passage in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to which Dürf devotes several interesting pages, significantly has Connie finding that 'the only things in the world that warmed her heart' were the five hens and their adoptive chicks. The unlikely, excessive feeling Lawrence projects into this passage is the closest he comes to associating his superficially sexual story with flying things – or rather, more poignantly, with things that might have flown but can't or don't.

What, then, are we to make of the climax of the book, the seventh sexual episode, 'a triumph, almost a vainglory'? This is the moment when Mellors crosses the last barrier and sodomises Connie. Dürf here finds a link, simple in conception but previously unthought of, to the greatest 'triumph' of aviation hitherto, the crossing of that 'last barrier', the Atlantic, by Allcock and Brown. The names symbolising, in Dürf's analysis, the first, the totally phallic, the second, the demotic usage ('a bit of brown') for sodomy. Lawrence exalted and envied this great achievement as the highest point in the book. The circle, it seems, is complete.

I have done no more than take a few of Dürf's arguments, far more fully and convincingly developed in his paper – which does, however, suffer from a certain opacity of style, so that the present vulgarisation may be worthwhile, particularly as I believe I have adequately presented not merely the essentials of his position, but also much of the more cogent detail. Yet it cannot but be that a fuller and more professional original is weakened in being retailed at this level.

On the Dürfian view sex may symbolise flight and flight may symbolise sex, and similarly with the objects and particular actions associated with each. Thus, within the constraints of 'resemblance', it might almost be said that anything may symbolise anything. It might ironically be suggested that this will be welcome news to certain types of modern writer, even more to certain types of modern critic.

Dan Jacobson

That one talent which is death to hide

Boet Barnard's career at the Kimberley Boys' High School did not begin auspiciously. He arrived in our class in the middle of term. Though it was a cold winter's day he was dressed only in a white shirt, khaki shorts, and a pair of sandals; he wore no socks. From his name and appearance it was evident he was an Afrikaner, a 'Dutchie', whom everyone else would be entitled to look down on. During break, when the boys ate the sandwiches their mothers had prepared for them, Boet stood aside, watching the others. He had no sandwiches of his own. Inevitably, some of the boys turned on him. His sandals and bare ankles were jeered at and trodden upon; his spasms of nervous shivering were mimicked; when he began to cry it was seen that he had no handkerchief, and this was the occasion for a further outburst of popular feeling against him.

As things began, so they continued. He was not clever, he was not strong, he was not good at games. In view of his reception in the class it is not really surprising that he soon developed what would nowadays be called 'school phobia'. He was seen being literally dragged to school by his mother, who was a large, stout woman dressed in black. Once he ran away from her and she pursued him unavailingly down the 'sanitary lane' between the school fence and the back of Dalham Road. On other mornings he arrived in a car driven by a tough-looking truancy officer. He locked himself up in the school lavatories, not to smoke or masturbate, like some bolder spirits, but simply in order to take refuge there. Then Mr West, the school caretaker, who carried everywhere with him a powerful aroma of pipe tobacco and stewed tea, had to unscrew the lock of the door to get him out. All this, for the rest of the class, meant excitement, the wasting of time that would otherwise have been devoted to boring lessons, an additional subject for our form-master's feeble witticisms. But it did nothing for Boet Barnard's status. At the end of the year he failed his examinations and was kept down.

I do not know how his new classmates treated him. Nor whether he continued to resist coming to school. A year passed; then another. We all grew taller. Boet remained in shorts when most of us had graduated to grey flannel trousers. For the rest he no longer appeared conspicuous in any way. One would never have supposed that he wanted to be conspicuous. When he acquired a bicycle none of us recognised it as a turning point in his career. How could we? Boet himself apparently failed to do so for many months. He rode quietly back and forth between school and home, his long, bare, veiny legs working industriously over the pedals. Yet it was on the saddle of that bicycle that Boet Barnard, butt and starveling, was to reveal qualities or ambitions none of us had previously suspected. Perhaps he himself had been surprised to discover them. It turned out that he was really a daredevil. A showman. The possessor of an inventive, assertive, self-sacrificial spirit. Almost, an artist.

Here I must say something about the unusual layout of the school grounds. At some distance, on the other side of Dalham Road, were two hostels, an elaborate pavilion (of which more below), and a couple of rugby fields and cricket pitches. Immediately around the school, however, was a large, fenced-in expanse which remained exactly as it must have been when the first diamond-diggers had flung down their belongings at random over the veld nearby, and thus brought into existence the city of Kimberley. There was a driveway which circled around a carefully nurtured clump of cypress trees; to the right of the buildings were some tennis courts; behind, the bike sheds. The rest, all the many, many acres of it, was naked, unadorned, unredeemed Northern Cape veld. Thorn bushes; tussocks of thin brown grass; ant-heaps from which the biggest rock you could throw would rebound as if from concrete; sand, boulders, ironstone outcrop.

This was the terrain on which Boet Barnard performed his first daredevil stunt. It was very simple. He got up speed on his bicycle along

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the driveway, and then suddenly wheeled left and plunged across the barest, hardest, most boulder-strewn piece of ground accessible to him. A big crowd of juniors had gathered to watch him; and when Boet came bearing down on them, his bicycle bouncing and jouncing madly on the barbarous surface, his face set in a grin, his shoulders hunched and his elbows splayed in the effort to keep control of the machine, even those boys who were yards from his route turned and fled, yelling with excitement and a strange contempt. The sun flashed on spokes and handlebars; the front wheel reared up; Boet and his machine fell backwards and hit the ground. Then everybody swarmed together again. Dazed and in some pain, he was helped to his feet. His bicycle was picked up. He was dusted off and mirthfully congratulated. Only when the bell rang was he allowed to limp off, wheeling his bike to the sheds, on his own.

Thereafter, for a while, he gave such performances quite often. He varied the site each time. Occasionally he managed to keep going at a good speed for 30, 40, 50 yards, before his bike went out of control. At other times he was less successful. Either way he could be sure of a crowd, and of its applause and derision. Once he broke his collar bone; more than once he buckled the front wheel of his bike, and had to push it home on its back wheel, the injured one carefully held clear of the ground.

His next stunt was more spectacular than the first. It came after a long spell, perhaps as long as a year, when he had lain low. This stunt was in fact his last; he repeated it several times, but he never went beyond it. Again he used his bicycle. This time he rode it all the way down the tiers of the pavilion, and then through the gap which provided access to the playing-fields. It was a most dangerous feat. The cement, step-like tiers, which were ordinarily used by spectators to sit on, were quite broad; but there were many of them, and there was a fall of at least 18 inches between each one. The entrance to the field below was just a few feet wide, and on either side of it was a man-high fence of three strands of steel cable, stretched tight between metal posts. So not only was there the danger of the rider coming off the bike and tumbling down the tiers; there was also that of his negotiating the steps successfully, but of doing so at a slant because of the jolting of the bike, in which case he would be flung against those taut cables.

It was an amazing spectacle. I saw him do it only once, the first time he tried it. One moment he hurtled through the air, the next he was practically jarred off the saddle; then he flew again. There seemed to be more than one of him cascading downhill, until he at last sailed triumphantly through the gap.

I heard from others that he repeated the stunt subsequently. Then the authorities got to know of these performances, and not only were they banned for the future, but Barnard was caned by the headmaster for having presented them in the past. That was the end of the story as far as the school was concerned. Another year or two, and Boet left. A few more years, and we had all left. We stopped growing taller, and began to forget one another.

Ten or 15 years passed before I saw Boet again. I was briefly revisiting Kimberley at the time; so was he. It was not an accident that I saw him. Advertisements in the newspaper and stickers on lamp-posts had urged me and everybody else to do so. *'Come and see,'* they had cried, *'Kimberley's own Boet Barnard!'*

So I went. There he was: helmeted, booted, dressed in leather, adorned with zips at angles all over his body, as if with some latterday, metallic version of tribal tattooing. I don't think I would have known him if I hadn't been expecting to see him; as it was, I recognised at once those thin, whipped features and that set grin. Around us, spread all over the grounds of the Kimberley Athletic Club, were the standard attractions of a travelling fair: a big wheel, a big dipper, dodgems, sideshows. There was even an ancient set of whirling swings attached by chains to a mechanised maypole; it had been placed on the very edge of the lighted area, and was the one 'ride' on which the hordes of Cape Coloureds and Indians present were permitted. The usual noise rose up to the cloudless night sky: music, shrieks from the swings, shouts from stall-holders. Together with many others I was standing over a giant wooden bowl, with a curved bottom and vertical sides, in the very depths of which Boet Barnard, Kimberley's own, fidgeted with his motor bike. Then he climbed on the machine, its engine roared, and he rode the Wall of Death.

Poems by Christopher Reid

Ransom and Rescue

Awkward, bluff,
our white ironwork
garden furniture –
Brobdingnag lace –

has reacquired
its sense of place
against these shower-
blackened flagstones.

A winter's evening,
but chairs and a wobbly
table bring back
something of summer:

a pair of glasses,
folded on a book
in lotus position,
that could have dwelt

eternally
on a phrase or two
of mantric print,
while we chattered;

a bumblebee,
like the drunken sexton
at his bellropes,
coming to grips

with a recalcitrant fuchsia.
I close the curtains
against the night,
but not before

a bus has passed
with its buoyant cargo
of hothouse weather,
gratuitously bright.

Folk Tale

And then there was a mad astronomer,
the shepherd of a solitary moon,
who chased his tiny, pock-marked planet
over the hills for half a morning.

The countryside was his enemy:
uncouth heather and highwayman copses
kept taking his jewel and hiding it.
His only friends were the eighteen
pickpockets.

Once he ambled into a nostril
of sand, that sneezed and sneezed to
expel him.
He left wounds on grassy pelts
and green tonsures. He often drew mud.

From time to time, coming upon
the moon, diffident, snug as a mushroom
on dank turf, he'd take his club
and smack it back into the sky.

It must have had occult properties,
to have led him so gullibly over the hills
in his houndstooth cap and tweed
knickerbockers,
feinting vague arcs in the numb air.

Aquarius

A pod, a purse, a penknife
and whatever they contained,
the ju-jus of the underworld
hung behind glass windows,
waiting to be explained.

Fauve in the murky water,
of course, they were simply tropical fish,
on wings of pantomime gauze
levitating
in accordance with certain arcane laws.

This crab, an Indian goddess,
safe in her battery of arms
(bracket folding upon bracket),
preserved her edible secret
against the lobster's farcical alarms.

But everything was bogus:
flapping a great sheet,
the ray rose up like a revenant
and showed his underside,
where human features could just be descried.

Your dear, departed uncle,
trying to 'come through',
turned out to be a turtle,
the old buffoon of the zoo
and not drowning, but waving ...

With aerials for whiskers,
attuned to the voice of God,
the giant catfish looked as fat
and smug as the fish in the proverb,
that swallowed the cat.

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Blood sports 1 **Kenneth Jennings supports the 'unspeakable'**

In place of wolves and eagles

AS MOST readers will already know, the Labour Party has recently announced that it intends banning blood sports, starting with the hound sports such as fox-hunting and beagling. The publication of a booklet entitled *Living Without Cruelty – Labour's Charter for Animal Protection* clearly shows that the party has no real knowledge of the biological factors involved, and that its interpretation of its own incorrect information is often illogical.

As an animal ecologist who does not support hunting practically, socially or financially, who has studied our larger predators and raptors for some 30 years, and who is actively and financially involved in conservation, I am appalled by the Labour Party's intentions and ignorance.

TO TAKE THE FOX first. The fox is now living in a totally artificial environment, in which the original forest has been virtually replaced by agricultural land. In the original habitat the fox was intermediate in the food chain, in that it was preyed upon by larger predators – principally the wolf and eagle – and was preying upon smaller creatures. Now that the superpredators have been removed the only completely natural control of fox numbers is starvation.

If the fox was not artificially controlled its numbers would climb rapidly until they were regulated by starvation. During the process attacks on lambs, ground nesting birds and other wildlife would escalate. Thus there is no doubt that for conservation reasons, even if one ignores the inevitable loss of lambs and its attendant price increases, the fox must be controlled.

Without doubt the major part of a fox's diet consists of rabbits and, sometimes, hares, so the average fit fox rarely causes much damage. But those that are sick or injured and incapable of catching their normal prey are, obviously, not thus inhibited and are much more likely to attack lambs as during the lambing time mice and voles are usually very scarce and worms and insects are still hibernating. It therefore follows that to obtain the best control sick and injured foxes should be killed.

There are six methods of control commonly used.

The snare is a potentially very cruel device because, irrespective of claims made by users, it very frequently catches the animal around the body rather than around the neck. Obviously when caught round the body death is slow and agonising, the animal sometimes biting into itself in a vain attempt to dislodge the offending wire. Even when the animal is caught around the neck death may not be quick because, unlike the rabbit, the snared fox tends to pull and struggle rather than bolting at full speed. The snare can tighten enough to cause unconsciousness and then the animal's oxygen requirement drops and it can recover consciousness again and again.

Not only is the snare extremely cruel, it is also completely non-selective in that once set there is no way of deciding which type of fox is caught. It may be a sick or injured one or it may be an extremely fit one. Even more serious is the fact that other species can be caught. In my own experience these can include deer, badgers, otters, cattle and sheep.

Traps have much the same faults. The gin is illegal but, as it is hard to detect, there is no doubt that its use would considerably increase if hunting were to stop. Even the 'Catch alive' traps can cause immense suffering as is shown by the way trapped animals often damage themselves seriously in attempts to escape from the totally unnatural detention. Obviously the trap is non-selective and it is extremely doubtful that any fox, no matter what its condition, would be released once caught.

Poison is frequently used but its effects are as bad as those of the snare. Those generally used are far from painless and, of course, there is no way that the person putting it down can know what will actually take the bait. Other species such as badgers, dogs, buzzards, and eagles can be killed instead. Again, there is also no possibility of choosing the type of fox to be poisoned: the first to find the bait dies.

Gassing is a technique used by the Ministry of Agriculture and advocated by the Labour Party booklet. Unfortunately it suffers from the same defects in that it is not entirely painless. Indeed in lengthy tunnels where the gas takes some time to build up to full strength the dying can be quite prolonged and painful. There is also the fact that the burrow complexes are frequently used by more than one species. Wandering badgers or otters will take up temporary residence at one end of a burrow which is already occupied by a fox. Thus, again, gas is non-selective

Shooting as well as gassing, is favoured by the authors of the Labour Party's document which states that shooting and gassing should be used to control foxes. We have already seen that gassing is of doubtful value but, when first considered, shooting seems to be an ideal method. Further examination of the facts, rather than the theories, show that there are serious drawbacks to shooting foxes. The fox is a quick-moving volatile animal that rarely stands still for more than a few seconds at a time. Thus it is not easy to shoot and when hit can often be wounded instead of being killed. A shotgun is lethal over a relatively short range and far too many foxes thus shot are simply peppered. Obviously the animal shot will be the animal seen and there is some evidence that the fox out in daylight is most likely to be a confident creature. Thus shooting is not only extremely likely to wound, it is also likely to be removing the very animals that can be safely left.

IT IS THUS clear that shooting is not so ideal – it is likely to wound and is non-selective. To further demonstrate the Labour Party's lack of knowledge and basic logic it must be added that they advocate shooting dog foxes only as the best way to control fox numbers. A moment's thought will show that this will have little effect and that to control numbers vixens would need to be shot. One cannot reliably distinguish the sex of a fox in the field.

The hunt consists of a pack of specially bred hounds chasing a fox. The redcoated followers on horseback have no place in the biological

'The English country gentleman galloping after a fox – the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable' (Oscar Wilde, *A Woman of No Importance*).

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argument, as the fox is not aware of them. Thus the fact that people hunt for the pleasure of the chase is also totally irrelevant to the question of the value of hunting. The hounds closely resemble the wolf – the defunct major predator – in stature, speed and stamina, but they are slower than the fit fox. Thus, immediately, we have the first example of biologically sound selection, as the fit fox will normally escape.

In some areas, especially hill country, the packs can be rushed to the scene of a recent attack. If this is done the offending fox can usually be tracked down. With the lamb killer removed, the other foxes can usually be left alone and no further damage will result. It would seem that, from the purely practical and biological point of view, the hunt is by far the most valuable method of control but one must also consider the possible mental stress on the fox.

As already explained the fox has been designed, as it were, by millions of years of evolution to chase or be chased. All evidence from actual observation in the field (some of it now readily available to the public through TV nature films) shows that they do not feel fear. Certainly not as we know or can imagine it. They have an instinctive reaction which leads them to avoid a predator and will take evasive action if actually chased. But the point is that this is stimulated by instinct, *not* by knowledge of what may happen. When a pursued animal escapes it shows no signs of suffering from fear, and immediately returns to normal behaviour.

Animals cannot afford the symptoms of fear as it would tend to cloud the judgement which is so necessary for them to escape.

Thus to summarise the case. The fox must be controlled, and all of the methods except hunting are unsuitable because they are cruel and non-selective and highly likely to kill other species as well. The hunt does none of these things and is closest to the natural process.

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Blood sports 2 **L. G. Pine defends the 'uneatable'**

Farming prey for fun

'I DREW AT THE CHAIN and brought out the gin (trap). Its jaws had snapped upon the leg and shoulder of a stoat. The valiant little beast was striving hard for life. For a moment its bright eyes looked at me; you would have said for a moment it wondered despairing if I might be deliverance from the iron teeth that mangled it. I was indeed deliverance. I gave it the mercy of death, but when I turned away, the world seemed a cruel place and the sunlight pitiless'. Oswald Barron, who wrote these words, was no anti-blood sports fanatic, but a man of culture and deep feeling for the cruelty of nature.

I do not want some lunatic addict of field sports to tell me that a stoat is a harsh predator. Or that the gin trap is now illegal. True, that is one of the inroads into the practice of blood sports which have been made in the face of criticism from the anti blood sport movement. I put forward the death of this wild creature as one of the millions of such deaths which form the background to the various blood sports of Britain.

Work with a gamekeeper. Study his methods, ask him how many of the 'vermin' (i.e. creatures which do not come within the definition of game or rough shooting) he expects to kill annually on his beat: 300 is a fair average. There are 8,000 keepers (stalkers is the name in Scotland) so we have well over 2 million creatures which have to be killed before ever we get to fox hunting, otter and hare hunting, game shooting etc.

In fact fox hunting is only the shop window of blood sports. It attracts inevitable attention: it cannot well do otherwise, because of its colourful character. The riding across country after the hounds is far more noticeable than the humdrum work of preserving pheasants, geese or ducks. Yet in fact the number of foxes killed in a year by hounds in Britain is usually less than the numbers of game birds killed in a Sandringham shooting season, where as many as 14,000 are 'accounted for . The latter is the euphemism now employed in field sports in place of the nasty word 'killed'. A fox is never 'killed'. Moreover, the number of foxes killed by means other than hunting exceeds the number 'accounted for' by the Hunts. Outside the hunting season few creatures bear a more charmed life than the fox. If one is disturbed by the beaters at a game shoot, he is in no danger, and is likely to be cheered on his way.

Perhaps the most unpleasant aspect of fox hunting is the sordid hypocrisy which attends it. On a small 600 acre estate, the gamekeeper employer is likely to be concerned mainly with shooting, but will also want to let the local Master of Fox Hounds have his quarry. So the keeper is instructed to ensure that at least one earth on the estate remains occupied. 'Of course I'll see that there is a fox to show your friends'. The foxes in other earths are then killed.

IT IS GAME SHOOTING which necessitates the whole apparatus of keepers and their assistants. The pheasant is, in Britain, an artificial bird. It was imported by the Romans, who were content to rear it as we do turkeys. The gigantic business of conserving this bird involves the provision from special farmers of 1,000,000 eggs per year. The bird when hatched is carefully reared, protected from the 2½ million vermin; naturally pheasants look to their keepers as friends and eventually as the time for slaughter approaches have to be driven into the woods and frightened into fending for themselves. It is fairly obvious that there can hardly be any truly wild pheasants in this country.

Then there are the numerous varieties of wildfowl, geese, ducks etc. These are often reared on flight ponds, whence they have to be scared by firecrackers when the time for shooting comes round. Partridges are truly native to this country, and are not much reared by hand. Still they are protected as far as possible by the keepers. Why? Well, to be shot of course.

So it is a horrible circle of destruction. Millions of birds have to be reared from eggs in incubators and saved from what human beings call 'vermin'; saved for the enjoyment of shooters – in short, for fun. And that is what blood sports are about: getting enjoyment from death or suffering of wild or semi-wild creatures.

Most other British blood sports, such as stag or deer shooting, hare coursing, beagling, otter hunting, punt gunning; and falconry (where man gets his pleasure from the natural behaviour of a predatory bird) are accorded the same justification as fox hunting by those who indulge in them. The sport is necessary, they claim, to keep down numbers, to preserve the balance of nature. Yet there is no such necessity. Hare numbers can be kept down by accurate shooting; the coursing of the hare cannot take place without the cooperation of local farmers who forego their need to shoot hares in order that the coursing fraternity may have – fun!

One of the most repulsive of all blood sports, otter hunting, is temporarily in suspension. For humane reasons? Certainly not. It is essential to let the otters recover so that our hunters can enjoy themselves once more.

Stag hunting in Exmoor is another revolting practice, and often ends in a most sordid death for the stag. Stag shooting in Scotland is less brutal but one wonders at the mentality which can go into sublime scenery, see a magnificent creature in its natural surroundings and enjoy killing it for amusement.

Arguments which are put forward in support of blood sports must bear a strong resemblance to those once urged in favour of headhunting. The latter was an ancient, manly tradition. It involved risk and trained young men in courage. Only spoil sports wanted to put an end to it.

L. G. Pine was Managing Editor of the Shooting Times *from 1960 to 1964. He is the author of* After their Blood, the History of Hunting.

League Against Cruel Sports.

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One fine morning – well, as fine as it could be, considering it was coming up to Christmas and everybody wishing it would soon be over – Chicken Licken was walking through the wood, when – SUDDENLY – an acorn fell from an oak-tree and hit him on the head.

'Ouch!' he cried. 'Help!! *The sky has fallen!!!*'

Now, that was a rather silly thing to say, but Chicken Licken was a bit of a berk who got frightened easily. And he was *especially* frightened that morning, because he'd been reading a book of essays from the Institute of Economic Affairs.

'Help!' he cried again, 'it's the Coming End of the Open Society!'

And he hurried on through the wood, still shaking with fright. Soon he met Robbin Dobbin, who was a Fearless Interviewer.

'Hello, Chicken Licken,' he said. 'What's all the rush?'

'The sky's fallen!' said Chicken Licken. 'I must go and tell the King.'

'H'm, interesting,' said Robbin Dobbin, peering through his fearless glasses. 'Should make a nice exclusive for Panorama. I'll come with you.'

And pausing only to adjust his fearless bow-tie, he hurried on after Chicken Licken.

Soon they met Jim Dim, strolling along at a moderate pace.

'Where are you two tearing off to?' he asked, after a pause not exceeding five minutes.

'To see the King,' said Robbin Dobbin. 'The sky's fallen.'

'I knew it!' said Jim Dim. 'It's that Wedgy Edgy and his daft manifesto –'

'Don't you mean *draft*?' asked Robbin Dobbin.

'I know what I meant,' growled Jim Dim. 'It's all Wedgy Edgy's doing.'

And off they all went to tell the King.

Soon they met Duky Puky, looking very stern and bad-tempered.

'Where the bloody hell are you lot off to?' he snapped.

'To see the King,' said Jim Dim. 'The sky's fallen.'

'It's time everybody got their fingers *out*,' said Duky Puky, putting his hands behind his back.

And with Duky Puky leading the way, followed by Chicken Licken, Robbin Dobbin and Jim Dim, they went on through the wood.

Soon they met Maggie Naggie, a lady-in-waiting.

'Goodness me,' she said. 'What on earth's happened?'

'Just about bloody everything,' said Duky Puky. 'The sky's bloody well fallen, and we're off to tell the King.'

'It didn't fall, it was *pushed*,' said Maggie Naggie, primping her feathers and staring hard at Jim Dim.

'Don't look at me like that, Maggie Naggie,' said Jim Dim. 'You can't blame me for everything.'

'I can jolly well try,' said Maggie Naggie. 'Well, if it's not your fault, it must be Teddy Heady's.'

'Anybody call me?' asked Teddy Heady, peeping round from behind a tree.

'You'll be lucky', said Maggie Naggie, and Teddy Heady disappeared with a sulky look on his face.

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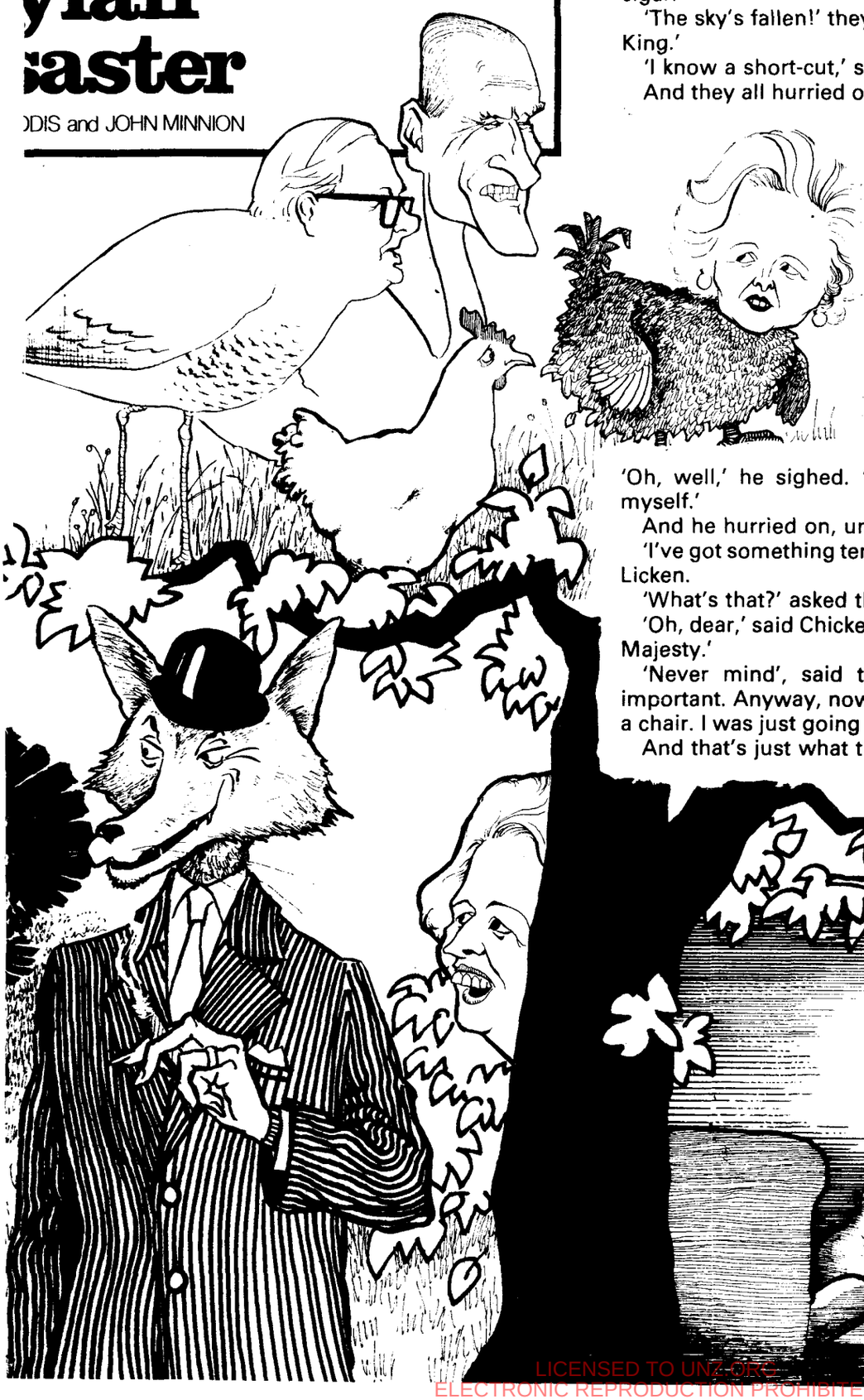

And the others all hurried on, until they met Powelly Scowly. When they told him what had happened, he wagged his finger at them.

'I warned you,' he scowled. 'It's a sign — a signal of an impending catastrophe – the beginning of the end of the British monarchy.'

And the whole procession went on their way. Then they met Mary Scary coming out of her white house.

'And not only the sky,' she said, when she heard the news. 'Everything's falling – the sky, standards, knickers – it's time for a firm stand. I'll re-phrase that – '

And on they went, until they met Foxy Roxy.

'What seems to be the trouble?' he asked, puffing on his big cigar.

'The sky's fallen!' they told him. 'We're on our way to tell the King.'

'I know a short-cut,' said Foxy Roxy. 'Follow me.'

And they all hurried on, with Foxy Roxy at the head

But instead of taking them to the King's palace he took them to his own house. Mrs Foxy Roxy and all the little Foxy Roxies were waiting by the door.

'Look what *I've* brought home for supper!' said Foxy Roxy with a huge wink and a merry laugh.

'We don't want that finger-lickin' Chicken Licken', said one little Foxy Roxy. 'We're fed up with takeaways.'

And they grabbed all the others and slammed the door, leaving poor Chicken Licken alone outside.

'Oh, well,' he sighed. 'I might as well go and tell the King myself.'

And he hurried on, until he reached the King's palace.

'I've got something terribly important to tell you', said Chicken Licken.

'What's that?' asked the King.

'Oh, dear,' said Chicken Licken. 'I'm afraid I've forgotten, Your Majesty.'

'Never mind', said the King. 'It couldn't have been *that* important. Anyway, now you're here, you might as well pull up a chair. I was just going to watch a disaster movie on the telly.'

And that's just what they did.

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Lord Acton: Gladstone's private sage, pioneer of modern history

The Catholic Libertarian

'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely' – few people have not encountered Lord Acton's dictum, one of the best-known attributed to any modern historian. Yet Acton himself remains a shadowy figure. History students are aware that the acceptance of Acton's recommendation to 'study problems, not periods' began the distinctively modern period of historical research. Others have felt some echo of the excitement caused by Acton's inaugural lecture, in 1895, as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, or have been influenced by the huge scope of the *Cambridge Modern History*, his most substantial memorial. To his contemporaries he was a figure touched both by glamour and by tragic failure: his ideas on historical method were in many ways ahead of his time ('caviare to the general', said one observer) and the *History of Liberty*, intended as a life-work, was never completed. To some hard-boiled contemporary historians Acton – with his insistence on the primacy of moral law in politics – may appear as an incomprehensible Victorian. But in this new essay his grandson, SIR HAROLD ACTON, gives a different picture, showing that John Acton scarcely resembled the traditional Victorian: rather, he was one of the first modern English intellectuals to be truly European in outlook.

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, still considered the most learned of English historians by reputable scholars, stands apart from his colleagues for many reasons, not least for the scarcity of his published writings. Among his prolific coevals he was an unique instance of quality rather than quantity.

The monumental masterpiece which he planned – the Cambridge Modern History – was written by others under his inspiration. A few lectures and essays published posthumously reflect all that is most important in his thought. Even his fame was largely posthumous. During his lifetime, so tranquil on the surface, so troubled underneath, he was only appreciated by a small élite. (True, this élite was both international and influential.) His standards were too high, his principles too austere to attract the ordinary reader, who could lap up Macaulay and Carlyle like Walter Scott and Bulwer-Lytton. Always a moralist, he declared:

> The best things that are loved and sought by men are religion and liberty, not pleasure or prosperity, not knowledge or power. Yet the paths of both are stained with infinite blood.

The best things, mark you. This is scarcely a comfortable saying, and it did not appeal to a happy-go-lucky utilitarian age.

How to preserve an element of freedom in the democratic society of the future was as urgent a problem to him as to his friend Alexis de Tocqueville. He visualised the modern danger as 'state-absolutism, not royal-absolutism.' 'It is bad to be oppressed by a minority, but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority,' he wrote. 'From the absolute will of an entire people there is no appeal, no redemption, no refuge but treason.' And he jotted down among his myriad notes:

> To reconcile liberty with an aristocratical society and a monarchical state was the problem, the striving of many centuries. To preserve it under absolute democracy is the special problem of the future.

The contrast between Lord Acton and the other late Victorians was therefore considerable. He lacked their complacency, their provincialism, and their facile optimism. He believed neither in man's essential goodness nor in his capacity to determine his own destiny. His most famous dictum – 'power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely' – was as remote as possible from Carlyle and the apologists for the Nietzschean superman, just as his literary style was remote from the remorseless rhetoric which makes so many stout Victorian tomes unreadable today. He was a completely cosmopolitan Englishman in a Windsor Forest of home-growths, wayward weeds that had grown rank owing to England's long isolation during the Napoleonic wars; and his advice to fellow-historians was: 'Resist your time – take a foothold outside it.'

He could not help sharing certain Victorian characteristics, such as a fundamental distrust of art and a corresponding absence of aesthetic judgments. But his foothold was firmly fixed outside his period: history, he wrote, 'compels us to fasten on abiding issues, and rescues us from the temporary and transient . . . Our most sacred and disinterested convictions ought to take shape . . . above the tumult and the tempest of active life.'

Not that he had the detachment of Hume or Gibbon, who could write with such calm confidence because they supposed that pure reason had come at last into her own. Many uncharted depths of knowledge and experience had been plumbed since the eighteenth century. So much more had been made accessible by Hallam and Macaulay, by Niebuhr, Ranke and Nommsen, by Michelet and Taine. The novels of Sir Walter Scott and the melodramatic narratives of Carlyle had also helped to change man's vision of the past as well as the scope and study of history itself. 'The "Philosophers" and the early French Revolutionists,' as G. M. Trevelyan wrote 'would have measured all human problems by the same rule. Against that unreal unity of mankind Burke protested. Scott illustrated and popularised Burke's protest.'

ACTON WAS FIRST moulded by Burke, of whom he wrote to Gladstone's daughter Mary:

> You can hardly imagine what Burke is for all of us who think about politics, and are not wrapped in the blaze and the whirlwind of Rousseau. Systems of scientific thought have been built up by famous scholars on the fragments that fell from his table. Great literary fortunes have been made by men who traded on the hundredth part of him.

From Burke he learned the need of ordered liberty – (liberty must be limited in order to be possessed) – and he described Burke's speeches of 1790 – 1795 as 'the law and the prophets.'

In order to understand this cosmopolitan and independent personality, whether as a historian or as a liberal, we must glance at his origins. One of the salient facts about him is that he was born in Naples on 10 January, 1834 – two days before the 24th birthday anniversary of King Ferdinand II who was to be attacked so fiercely by Mr Gladstone, Acton's intimate friend and patron. Vesuvius had been erupting merrily since 1 January; a new frigate had been launched by the King with Bourbonic pomp; and there was an extensive distribution of royal charity to celebrate the occasion. Ferdinand was in his absolutist prime, very conscious of his divine right. The birth took place in the Acton Palace, built and sumptuously furnished by the historian's father, Sir Richard Acton. It stands sedately aloof from the reverberating traffic of the Riviera di Chiaia behind tall iron gates and railings, a neo-classical façade of white Doric columns in an oasis of park, quite English except for the palm trees, soothing to the eye after the chaos around and behind it, the tiers of cement blocks rising from the once verdant hill of the Vomero. His grandfather, Sir John Acton, after whom he was named, was a forthright absolutist without mental reservations.

The son of an expatriate member of the ancient family of Shropshire baronets who had settled at Besançon, married a French lady and practiced medicine for a living, young John migrated to Leghorn to join his quixotic uncle Commodore Acton, formerly of the East India Company, who had become a Tuscan subject and head of the Tuscan navy. On his uncle's death in 1766 John succeeded to the command of the small Tuscan fleet, and he so impressed the Grand Duke Leopold with his efficiency in the joint expedition of Spain and Tuscany against Algiers in 1775 that he recommended him to his favourite sister Maria Carolina, the young Queen of Naples, when she wanted to reorganise the Neapolitan navy.

He was a bachelor of 42 when he went to Naples, and he did not expect to remain there, but he stayed on for the rest of his life. The Queen adored him, and the King was only too grateful to be relieved of his graver responsibilities by this extremely capable sailor-soldier of fortune. He soon became Prime Minister, a position he enjoyed, off and on, almost until his death in 1811.

Until he inherited the Shropshire baronetcy in 1790 he was dependent on his own resources as the mentor of a fantastically eccentric semi-literate king, and of a scheming, energetic, temperamental queen, who eventually became jealous of his influence over her husband. He continued to keep his balance between this ill-assorted pair, but the

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prolonged strain affected his health. Instead of retiring to Shropshire he clung to his arduous post, married his juvenile niece Mary Anne at the age of sixty-four, and by collaborating with Lord Nelson and Sir William Hamilton, saved Sicily for the Bourbons while their kingdom on the mainland was overrun and occupied by the French. It is commonly stated that he was head of a reign of terror in Palermo, but this is gross exaggeration. Undoubtedly he shared some responsibility for the trial and execution of traitors who had collaborated with the French invaders and plotted against the ruling dynasty. Like Maria Carolina (whose sister had been guillotined) he had been appalled by the violence of the French Revolution and wished to prevent any similar occurrence in the Two Sicilies.

SIR JOHN died at Palermo in 1811, and Maria Carolina wrote in her diary: 'Learned with deep sorrow of the death of worthy General Acton whom I have known intimately for 36 years, for thirty-two years the master – honest, talented and devoted, with inflexible principles – I wept much over his irreparable loss.' His grandson the historian also had inflexible principles but in every other respect they were different.

Sir John's elder son, Sir Richard, married the only child of the Duke of Dalberg (French by adoption, he accompanied Talleyrand to the Congress of Vienna). The younger son, Charles, became a Cardinal, and helped to pave the way for the restoration of Pius IX – the pope whose authoritarianism was eventually to cause Lord Acton his greatest spiritual travail. Immediately, though, Charles Acton had a greater influence on the historian's career by insisting, when Sir Richard died of pneumonia in 1837, that the boy be educated in England. (Sir Richard's widow married Lord Leveson Gower, a wordly-wise Whig who became Liberal Foreign Minister under Lord John Russell and Gladstone).

Until his mother's remarriage the historian's early childhood was spent in the neoclassical palace on the Chiaia, in a sublimated seraglio of bluestockings of various nationalities. Many years later he told Mary Gladstone that Mrs Augustus Craven, author of the once-popular *Récit d'une soeur* (1866), 'was almost my earliest friend.' A few years older than Lady Acton, Pauline Craven was the daughter of Charles X's ambassador at Rome, Count de La Ferronays, who lost his post after the July revolution and settled in Naples in an atmosphere of nostalgic legitimism and poetical piety. The soulful Mrs Craven wrote in a style best described as lachrymose, and the style and the woman must have been akin. Little John Acton was half smothered by the cloying sentimentality of her circle. His puritanical traits must have been a reaction from the Neapolitan emotionalism of this milieu: with characteristic understatement he was to criticise his earliest friend's 'restlessness, indiscretion, and want of serenity.'

After 1840 he spent more time at Aldenham in Shropshire but he never seems to have been initiated into the sporting life of his neighbours. At the age of nine he was sent to Oscott College, near Birmingham, under the supervision of the future Cardinal Wiseman, 'approachable and generous, and no great friend of discipline,' as Acton was to describe him later. For Wiseman 'all history was a paean to the Church's progress'; and he visualised Oscott as 'a great engine employed in England's conversion and regeneration.' Intellectually he towered above the majority of his own clergy, and the budding historian succumbed to his fascination.

John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton *National Portrait Gallery, London*

The nine year old boy does not appear to have suffered from homesickness. His letters from Oscott show an astonishing precocity. He devoured poetry – Dante, Tasso and 'divine' Pope – the classics, and French and German histories. He was already a talented linguist and he was free from any tincture of false modesty. Aged ten he wrote:

> I am a perfect linguist, knowing perfectly – that is, so as to be able to speak them – English, French, German, and can almost speak Latin. I can speak a few words of Chinese, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Irish. I also know Chemistry, Astronomy, Mechanics, and many other sciences, but do not know botany.

He signed this letter Caesar Agamemnon John Dalberg Acton. At the age of thirteen he informed his mother: 'I am going to write a compendium of the chief facts, in history, for my own occasional reference.'

After a while he felt he had exhausted the educational resources of Oscott, for he wrote:

> It is impossible to fulfil any further in Oscott my duties to God, to you and to myself in the way that I should. The institution is very good for most young people but not for me. My strongest passion – the desire to make a name for myself – can, I am quite sure, only be satisfied if I develop through my studies the gifts that heaven has conferred on me, and here I do not find competition.

Before the age of sixteen he went to Edinburgh to improve his Greek under private tuition, but was debarred by his Catholicism from entering Cambridge University. At Cambridge in 1895 he was to open his *Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History* with a touching reference to that fact:

> Fellow Students – I look back today to a time before the middle of the century, when I was reading at Edinburgh and fervently wishing to come to this University. At three colleges I applied for admission, and, as things then were, I was refused by all. Here, from the first, I vainly fixed my hopes, and here, in a happier hour, after five-and-forty years, they are at last fulfilled

JUVENILE ENTHUSIASMS soon wither. Cardinal Wisemen had been an early stimulus but he was, as Acton said dismissively, 'an all-round person', too versatile, too many-sided, and committed to the Ultramontanism – Church over State, and Pope over Church – from which Acton revolted as he revolted from his mother's confessor Monsignor

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Dupanloup, who was versatile in a quite different manner.

The lush atmosphere of the palace at Naples, of which we get whiffs in *Le Récit d'une soeur*, the histrionic humanism of Monsignor Dupanloup, and the diffuse learning of Cardinal Wisemen, exhilarated by the Oxford Movement and the advancing regiment of distinguished Catholic converts – all this was inseparable from a strong Zeitgeist rhetoric, saturating the prose of Chateaubriand and Wiseman's novel *Fabiola*. The young Acton shied away from it as from something meretricious. Acton distrusted facility: he was never afraid of hard work, as his boyish resolve to write a compendium of the chief facts in history shows. Conscious of his natural gifts, he wished to develop, concentrate and canalise them. His paternal grandfather had been the bulwark of Bourbon absolutism in Naples: his own ambition was to be the bulwark of moral and historical absolutes.

With his urbane political stepfather he had little in common: most Whigs had a horror of highbrows, and one suspects that Earl Granville was dismayed by John Acton's austere intellectualism. Granville's sister, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, took an interest in the child, but she was another Mrs Craven, a writer of sentimental novels and sickly verse. John's mother combined worldliness with piety – a penchant for Parisian fashion with the confessional of Monsignor Dupanloup – and even she must have wondered at the intense seriousness of her offspring. It was a lonely childhood, surrounded by uncomprehending adults. 'I never had any contemporaries,' he wrote.

The lack of a father was supplied by Professor Johann Ignaz von Döllinger of Munich University – priest, theologian and formidable historical scholar, who was eventually to be excommunicated by Pius IX. Acton went to live in Döllinger's house in 1850: under Döllinger's tuition he followed a monastic routine of study from 8 am to 10 pm. The frigid reserve that repelled others, the physical ugliness and austerity – for Döllinger abhorred wine, beer and tobacco – gained by contrast with the gushing sociabilities he had left behind. Writing home, he described Döllinger as

> the most cool-headed man I ever knew and probably the most dispassionate. His judgment is singularly original and independent . . .

Döllinger gave Acton an enduring respect for patient, accurate German scholarship, teaching him to look at everything from a historical point of view. Intellectually, the young historian became in large part a German: 'the greatest growth of intellectual life', he wrote, 'is in Germany'. His mother was of German origin though she spoke and wrote to him in French; he was to marry a Bavarian cousin, Countess Arco-Valley; his knowledge of the language was said to be perfect, and it often supplied him with the *mot juste* which others find in French or Italian. Naples was utterly banished from his mind.

This propensity coincided with the rising interest in German language and literature in England, where it had been neglected if not unknown until the end of the eighteenth century. Closer relations between the English Court and Germany, intensified by Victoria's marriage, attracted increasing attention to all things German. Such ardent scholars of Italian as Coleridge and J. H. Merivale turned predominantly to German at the end of their lives: at least in this respect Acton might be said to have had contemporaries.

It was Döllinger's dedication to pure scholarship which inspired Acton to try to create a similar climate in England. He hoped to broaden the intellectual horizon of English Catholics narrowed by years of persecution and isolation.

AFTER A JOURNEY to the United States in 1853 with his relative Lord Ellesmere and a visit to Russia in 1856 as his stepfather's secretary on a special mission to the coronation of Czar Alexander II, which enabled him to observe the antitheses of autocracy and democracy with a cold critical eye, Acton took over the editorship of *The Rambler*, a Catholic bimonthly periodical, in 1859. This reappeared as *The Home and Foreign Review* in 1862, and nowadays it is hard to conceive what a fuss it created in the hierarchy by its insistence that the Church had nothing to fear from the discovery of new scientific or historical truths in the temporal sphere. 'A political law or a scientific truth may be perilous to the morals or the faith of individuals, but it cannot on this ground be resisted by the church . . . A discovery may be made in science which will shake the faith of thousands,' wrote Acton, 'yet religion cannot refute it or object to it.' Cardinal Wiseman, his former headmaster, was outraged. The whole tone of the *Review*, he complained, showed 'habitual preference of uncatholic to catholic instincts, tendencies, and motives.' Pope Pius IX declared the opinion of Catholic writers to be subject to Rome, and the review ceased publication – in order, as Acton wrote, 'that I may combine the obedience which is due to ecclesiastical authority with an equally conscientious maintenance of the rightful and necessary liberty of thought.'

While Acton was contributing articles of an astonishing range and depth to these journals (which were only read by a small minority) he also sat as a Liberal MP, first for Carlow in Ireland and then for Bridgnorth near Aldenham. But he did this from a misguided sense of duty, for he had neither talent nor inclination for public life. His friendly advice was greatly valued by Gladstone, who regarded him as a sage ('the best-read man in Europe') and recommended him eventually for the peerage.

Those who recall the *Memoirs* of Alexis de Tocqueville may observe certain parallels at this point. De Tocqueville had sacrificed his health to politics, and his historical studies seemed the more desirable since he had been forced to renounce them. He realised that his writings were more effective than his speeches, and that they alone could give him solid satisfaction. Louis Napoleon's *coup d'etat* of 2 December 1851 obliged de Tocqueville to retire from public life – which had brought him little but worry, fatigue, and contact with people he could not respect. 'The great misfortune of France', he told the economist Nassau Senior, 'is the preference of *égalité* to liberty.' Tocqueville's liberalism, like Acton's, was a moral attitude rather than a political doctrine. Perhaps his most familiar saying was: 'I have no traditions, I have no party, I have no cause, if it is not that of liberty and human dignity.'

What many have regarded as Pio Nono's *coup d'état*, the promulgation of the Vatican decrees in July, 1870, proclaiming the Pope's infallibility, made Acton like, de Tocqueville, retire from the public scene. He had no intention of leaving the Church 'whose Communion is dearer to me than life.' But he would not accept the dogma. Döllinger, as a priest, was excommunicated. Acton as a layman was left alone, to ponder during the next thirty years on that history of liberty which in the end he never wrote. Two essays, hundreds of notes, manuscripts, thousands of annotated books – the preparation was immense, monumental in itself. But as more and more material accumulated, more notes, more books, more manuscripts, he seems to have been troubled by qualms. The ideas and facts he had collected were almost too many for one man to sift, arrange and alembicate. He had not the flowing pen of a Macaulay: he was an extremely conscientious perfectionist.

Miss Gertrude Himmelfarb has detected with acumen that in certain comments upon Döllinger Acton was really criticising himself. 'He would not write with inperfect materials, and to him the materials were always imperfect.' In a letter to Creighton he stated that he wished 'to say all he knew and get his knife *into every joint without being felt*.'

Was not this quiet surgical technique, this self-effacement, another reaction to the rhetoric of a Carlyle? His style was peculiar, not to say difficult, in consequence: the sharp knife slipped into every joint, but it was heavily loaded with learning. (The notes to the first edition of his *Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History* fill as many pages as the lecture itself.) The desire for impersonal precision led to obliqueness; the load of scholarship led to allusiveness. Sentences clear in themselves are obscured by the density of their paragraphs. Had his *History of Liberty* been written, it might have been a historical parallel to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, beyond the assimilative capacities of the ordinary reader.

Professor Maitland thought him capable of writing unaided the twelve volumes of the *Cambridge Modern History*. No doubt he was master of the basic material, but when a man knows so much and is aware of so many philosophical problems the overriding problem of formulating it in comprehensible language becomes acute. Literary beauty and charm become dangerous distractions. As Sir Walter Raleigh pointed out in an essay on *Style*, the Latin historian who declared that he would have made Pompey win the battle of Pharsalia had the effective turn of the sentence required it, may stand for the true type of literary artist. Acton shunned the effective turn of the sentence with paradoxical effect. As Figgis and Laurence wrote in their introduction to his *Essays on Liberty*, 'he knew how young minds are apt to be enchained rather by the persuasive spell of the manner than by the living thought beneath it. He was interested in knowledge – *that it might diminish prejudice and break down barriers*. To a world in which the very bases of civilisation seemed to be dissolving he preached the need of directing ideals.'

IN SPITE of himself, Acton did achieve literary beauty of an august kind in his famous *Inaugural Lecture* and in his two lectures on the *History of Freedom*, which were studded with memorable phrases all the richer for their chaste setting, such as: 'Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end.' And: 'We have no thread through the enormous intricacy of modern politics except the idea of progress towards

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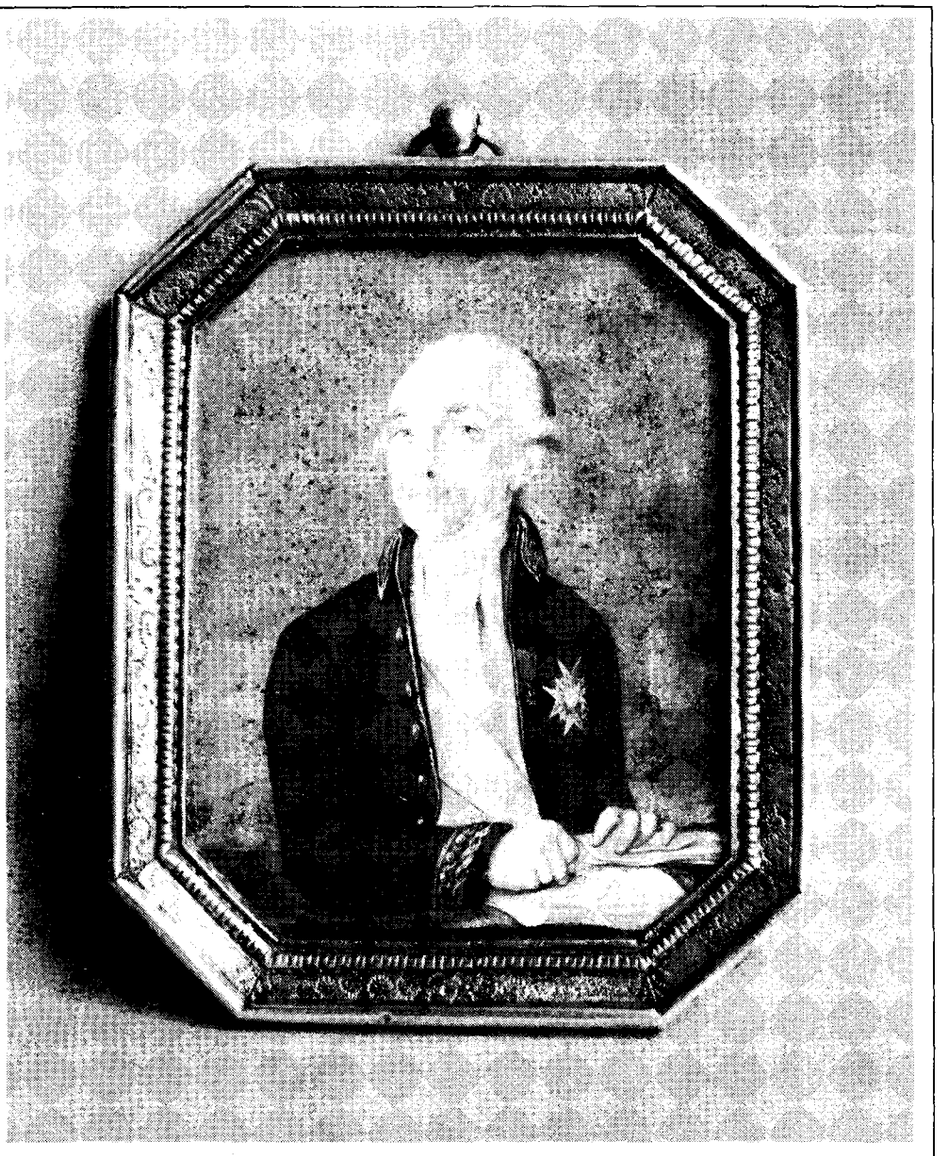

Sir John Acton *National Portrait Gallery, London*

more perfect and assured freedom and the divine right of free men.' The mantle of the prophet had fallen on him in his maturity.

What did his pupils make of him? His appointment to the Regius Professorship at Cambridge in 1895 when he was sixty came as a general surprise. As Dr G. M. Trevelyan wrote:

> The Regius Professorship is a Crown appointment, and by good chance Lord Rosebery was Prime Minister that year. Acton was little known in England then, even to the learned world, and I doubt whether any Board or Committee of English historians would at that time have thought of choosing him as Professor. But Rosebery conferred that great benefit upon us . . .
>
> His knowledge, his experience and his outlook were European of the Continent, though English Liberalism was an important part of his philosophy. He at once created a deep impression in our somewhat provincial society. Dons of all subjects crowded to his oracular lectures, which were sometimes puzzling but always impressive. He had the brow of Plato, and the bearing of a sage who was also a man of the great world. His ideas included many of our own, but were drawn from other sources and from wider experience. What he said was always interesting, but sometimes strange. I remember, for instance, his saying to me that States based on the unity of a single race, like modern Italy and Germany, would prove a danger to liberty: I did not see what he meant at the time, but I do now!

He accepted a Professorial Fellowship at Trinity, and at first lived in his rooms in Nevile's Court. There he was to be found at all hours, accessible to any Cambridge historian from Maitland or Cunningham to the humblest undergraduate, ready to help anyone from the profound stores of his knowledge. He sat at his desk, hidden away behind a labyrinth of tall shelves which he had put up to hold his history books, each volume with slips of paper sticking out from its pages to mark passages of importance.

Though Dr Trevelyan asserted that he was little known in England, Acton had received many academic honours (honorary Doctor of Philosophy at Munich in 1872; honorary Doctor of Laws at Cambridge in 1888; honorary Doctor of Civil Laws at Oxford in 1889; honorary Fellow of All Souls in 1890) and he had even been appointed Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria.

'His learning was only a part of him,' wrote a genial friend, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff (in *Out of the Past*).

> To make Acton you had to add, *inter alia*, his lightness of touch in conversation, his half-cynical playfulness, his power of making himself at home in all circles from the Court to the College, his curiously interesting range of European relations, and a certain glamour which many must have felt, but which none, I imagine, could define.

When one remembers his youthful letter from Oscott about his strongest passion, the desire to make a name for himself, one feels that it should have been satisfied; yet in spite of what seemed a successful marriage, fond parenthood and fame, several of his notes betray loneliness and frustration. After his estrangement from Döllinger in 1882 he wrote in an oft-quoted passage:

> I am absolutely alone in my essential ethical position, and therefore useless . . . My time can be better employed than in waging a hopeless war. And the more my life has been thrown away, the more necessary to turn now, and employ better what remains.

He was also alone in his mountainous erudition, but this was a form of solitude he must have enjoyed, for the pleasure of the chase entered into it. He collected a magnificent library of some 60,000 volumes, now in Cambridge University Library. Grant Duff has recorded that 'his usual rate of book consumption was a German octave *per diem*, and he had one of those faultless memories on which everything imprinted itself at once and remained for ever.' He also built up an elaborate system of cross-references and notes which still remain. And he travelled frequently between Aldenham, London, Cambridge, Cannes and Tegernsee, his wife's estate in Bavaria, and led a varied social existence. Finally, he taught, lectured, planned and edited the *Cambridge Modern History* from 1896 until his paralytic state in 1901, and thereby founded the co-operative study of history by experts, each of whom covered a special area.

No doubt it fell short of Acton's ideal of a 'history independent of historians', but it was a formidable achievement. The inspiration of his personality lived on, but the personality itself, so protean, diverse, contradictory and international, eludes the modern student. The fragments that fell from his table are still picked up and quoted by politicians and newspaper editors, yet he is sometimes treated as a failure because of that unwritten masterpiece, his *History of Liberty*. His few posthumous publications have survived most of his prolific contemporaries. They will always provide food for intelligent discussion. 'The greatest men,' as he noted, 'you can quote for everything.'

IN OUR age of extreme specialisation Acton is an example of multilingual omniscience. The vast range of his knowledge is even apparent in his letters to Mary Gladstone, but she was one of the few intellectual ladies who could make him talk freely on every kind of subject. To others less intellectual like Margot Asquith, he seemed a bore, for he had no small talk and his silence could be oppressive. In conversation with Lord Bryce, as the latter recorded, 'the whole landscape of history had been suddenly lit up by a burst of sunlight,' and Lord Morley, his rival Gladstonian, remarked: 'If the gods granted me the privilege of recalling to life for half a hour's conversation some of the great men of the past whom I have had the great fortune to know, I should say, Acton.' But we can only intuit the quality of that conversation from his printed lectures on Modern History, which, more than eighty years on, have not been superannuated.

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Short Story by Martin Amis

Heavy Water

John and Mother stood side by side on the stern deck as the white ship back-pedalled out of the harbour. Some people were still waving in friendly agitation from the shore; but the great machines of the dock (impassive guardians of the smaller, less experienced machines) had already begun to turn away from the parting ship, their arms folded in indifference and disdain . . . John waved back. Mother looked to starboard. The evening sun was losing blood across the estuary, weakening, weakening; directly below, the slivers of crimson light slipped helplessly over the oil-stained waters, like mercurial rain off fat lilies. John shivered. Mother smiled at her son.

'Tired and thirsty, are you, John,' she asked him (for they had travelled all day), 'tired and thirsty?'

John nodded grimly.

'Let's go down then. Let's go down, come on.'

Things started heating up the next day.

'What, he's a bit mental, is he?' said Mr Brine with hostile levity – 'a little bit mental?' Mrs Brine frowned at her husband, as if in reproof; but really she was far too drunk and happy to mind – as Mr Brine well knew.

'Yes,' said Mother simply, gazing across the deck to the sea (where the waves were already rolling on to their backs to bask in the sun). 'Yes, he is. Are you too hot, John? Say if you are.'

'Does he always cry then?' said Mr Brine.

'Always,' consented Mother. 'It's his eyes. It's not that he's *sad*. The doctors say it's his poor eyes.'

'Poor chap,' said Mrs Brine. 'I do feel sorry for him.' Mrs Brine was in fact experiencing a hopeless pang of admiration and love for Mr Brine – Mr Brine, with his bronzed pot-belly, his holiday manner and his colossal cigar. 'What's his name? "John"? How are you, John? Enjoying your cruise, are you? Oh dear, look, he's crying again. Cheer up, John! Cheer up!'

The sea twanged in the heat. The sun came crackling across the water towards the big ship. John was six foot tall. He was forty-three.

John sweated helplessly in his charcoal-grey suit. He wore a plain white shirt – but, as always, an eyecatching tie. He showed no obvious signs of discomfort, and somehow his heavy, very mistaken clothing was one of the least incongruous things about him. It all suited John. He had a fat red face, the face of a scalded baby. His entire frame was fat, flowing, far more than anybody could need. His chin toppled into his chest and his chest toppled into his stomach; he had uneasy, protuberant, eunuchoid buttocks – and a little shy sprig for his manhood, which Mother would sometimes ruefully inspect. Water seeped and crept and tip-toed from his eyes all day and all night. It was his *eyes*. Mother loved him very much. There was nothing she would not do to cordon him off from pain.

'Yes,' said Mother, leaning forward reassuringly, 'he's still a child really – aren't you John.'

At seven o'clock every morning they were brought tea and the *Della Cruise News* in their cabin by the sighing young steward. John rolled heavily off the lower bunk and sat rubbing his eyes with his knuckles, very like a child, as Mother descended nimbly from above. She drank two cups of the boiling pink liquid, and then briskly fed John from his bottle – the same mixture as ever, the one she knew he liked. Next, grunting tenderly, she inserted his dripping dentures (as she withdrew her hand, silver threads of saliva would cling yearningly to her fingers – please don't take your hand away, please, not yet). She stood proudly by his side as he used the water-closet, inexpertly, sometimes abandoning his aim altogether, rearing back in awe of the mighty wash he had released. Mother mopped up. She clothed his cumbrous body, clicking her tongue with satisfaction as she furled the giant Windsor of his flaming tie.

'Do you want to go down for your breakfast now John?' she asked in a light, rhetorical voice.

'Gur,' said John. ('Gur' was yes. No was 'Go'.)

'Come on then John. Come on.'

In the submarine heat of the spacious, zigzagged dining-room, with its pearl-droplet lighting, Mother energetically consumed the full Grill – omelette, sausage, tomatoes, bacon and perhaps a kidney – while John enjoyed a soft-boiled egg, watched with predatory irony by Mr and Mrs Brine and by the other two guests at their table: a young man who had thoughts only for his sunbathing and the dazzling tan with which he intended to return to his ventilation-engineering plant in Croydon, and a beaky woman in her late thirties who came largely for the plentiful food and the lecherous officers (the food was indeed plentiful; the officers, on the other hand, usually turned out to be not quite lecherous enough). Soft, see-through white of egg would bobble hesitantly down John's face, pausing on his chin to look before it leapt on to the expanse of the serviette firmly secured to his chest by Mother.

At ten o'clock they attended the Singalong in the Kingfisher Bar. And in this cramped and leathery venue they sangalong to the sounds of the Des Delano Trio. Or Mother did: John just wallowed with his head perched on his wide bent back, his liquid eyes bright, expectant. It was an apprehension of Mother's that John particularly relished these mid-morning sessions. Once, in the middle of a woozy Sinatra number which always took Mother back (the bus-shelter beneath the sodden Palais, larky Bill with his jacket on inside-out because of the rain, a single, teetering kiss), John jerked upright and let forth a deep guttural roar that almost put the band out of beat and earned a chuckling rebuke from handsome, dirty-minded Des when the song had been successfully completed. John grinned in furtive confusion. So did everyone else. Mother marched John back down to the cabin. She gave him a good talking to; and he never did it again.

Later they would take a turn on deck before repairing to the Cockatoo Rooms, where Prize Bingo was daily disputed. Again, John sat there stolidly, as Mother fussed over her card – an abstracted, nestproud sparrow, with new and important things to think about. He gave signs of animation only when the contestants wolf-whistled in response to the Caller's fruity 'Legs Eleven!' or when they chanted back a triumphant 'Sunset Strip!' to his enticing 'Sevenny *Seven* . . .'. (The Caller was a queer, by the way, and made no secret of the fact, to Mother's disgust.) This morning she got eight numbers in a row and, surprising herself, yelped out '*House!*' as if exclaiming some shameful truth about her own life. John clapped his fat red hands – once, twice. Everyone near by smiled approvingly, except Mrs Brine, who watched Mother with blank and silent hatred. Mrs Brine didn't mind losing, but Mr Brine minded losing, and Mrs Brine minded that

At about twelve-thirty John was given his midday bottle. Considerably refreshed, he would then diffidently squire Mother to the Robin's Nest for the convenient buffet lunch. (It took John a long time to get there: he always bumped into the corridor walls, like a man in a fast train, steadying himself slowly to the ship's roll.) With trays on their laps they watched through a hot glass window the men and women playing quoits and deck-tennis. Mother looked at John, slumped over his untouched food: he didn't seem to mind that he couldn't play. Mother smiled. Her Bill had been a fine sportsman in his day – bowls on the green, snooker, darts . . . John was only – how old? – eighteen months when Bill went (the Civic Centre, scaffolding, calm insurance men finding fault). Well, what a year that had been. Barely a month after the funeral – with a feverish, nagging inevitability – little John's subnormality came to light; and for a long while Mother's life became the kind of tired riddle that wounding dreams set you to unlock. She buried Bill and, before the year was out, she'd had to put John back on the bottle, for good. Mother turned again. Now John slept, his chin tripled over his plump tie-knot, the four thin lines of water idly exploring his face, two from the corners of his mouth, two from his eyes, eyes that never quite went to sleep. Mother reached up with her serviette and wiped the tears away.

At five or so she gently massaged him awake. Waking was always a random and ticklish business for John; it was only with much painful endeavour that he could locate the bits of consciousness gingerly allotted to him. 'Better now?' she would ask. John nodded sadly. Then, together, hand in hand, they shuffled below to change.

For John, the evenings would elongate themselves in interminable loops and tangles – and he no longer tried to work them out . . . Half an hour with Mother in the Parakeet Lounge, a friendly pinch on the cheek from Teri, tonight's Parakeet Girl (actually Teri lost her

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nerve at the last moment, and just skimmed her fingertips against John's face: she hadn't reckoned on the skin's slippery numbness. But never mind; no one noticed, not even John). Dinner in the Flamingo Restaurant – a fanned card-pack of evening wear. Mother went through the motions of encouraging John to eat something (she had his bottle ready but did not want to shame him in front of the Brines). John looked at the food: the food looked all wrong to John; to him, food never looked really dead. And he got into hopeless muddles and messes with his dentures (were they alive too?), and Mother stared. He ate nothing. On the way to coffee in the Robin's Nest, Mother liked to linger in one of the Fun Alleys. John stood behind her as she lost her nightly fiver on the stocky and powerful fruit-machines. She tugged and wrenched with her thin stiff right arm, like a machine herself in the jangling passageway. She never won anything. The other machines constantly and convulsively hawked out silver coins into their metal bibs (their keepers looking on coolly; even the nervous children won sometimes). But Mother's machine was giving nothing away, squat, smug, beaming, chockful of good things sneeringly denied to her. 'Maximise Your Pleasure By Playing All Five Lines,' said a sign above each machine, referring to the practice of putting in more than one coin at a time. Mother invariably tried to maximise her pleasure in this way, so she lost quickly, and they were never there for long.

. . . What next? Time went slower as time went by. People wouldn't let the day go out of their hands: they wanted value, value. Every evening had its theme, and tonight was Talent Night – Peacock Ballroom, 10.30 sharp. Ranked couples eddied towards the double doors, the prismatic women with their handbags, the grimly spruced men with their drinks. They rippled in lines as the ship inhaled mightily, riding its luck. Someone flew out across the floor in a clattering sprint, hit the wall and fell over, heavily (a damson-jacketed waiter knelt down by the body, yelling out orders to a boy in blue). Mother steered John forward, through the doors, past the people candidly jostling for the better seats, and into the spangled shadows, where at length she wedged him between a backrow pillar and herself. 'All right?' she asked. John, hot, saturated, black-suited John, heaved up his head and looked dourly stageward as the lights went down.

There was a lady, nearly Mother's age, who performed a salacious, high-stepping Cockney number about loneliness, disease and penury – out of key and out of time, but with enough clockwork vigour to win the audience's contemptuous applause. There was a dear little boy – still at the Infants', they said – who completed a classical piece on the electronic organ without once making a mistake. There was an elderly gentleman with a sturdy, well-trained voice who sang *Bless This House* and, as a potent encore, *If I Can Help Someone*. Then a tall, sidling young man appeared and, after some confusion with the effeminate compere, unceremoniously proposed to drink a pint of beer without at any point using his hands: placing the tall brown glass on the floor, the man lowered himself mysteriously out of sight on the flat stage; a few seconds later his large sandalled feet, quivering and very white, craned into view above the heads of the audience, the brimmed glass wobbling and slopping in their grip; there followed, in brisk succession, an abrupt crack and a harsh shout of anger and pain ('Drunk,' thought Mother wearily as the man stood up, a hand clutched to his bleeding lips, and remonstrated with the scandalised compere). Mother got ready to leave. Who cared? There were never any winners. She poked John and directed a sharp finger at the end of the aisle. John made no response; he sat there, frowning, as the man on the stage gesticulated slackly at his hecklers. 'Sit *down* woman,' said someone standing behind. Mother turned, glimpsing a clump of hate-knotted faces. She poked John again. 'Go,' he groaned. *Right then, my lad*, thought Mother, reaching down to give John's thigh a good pinch – the fleshy underside which was always so sore and chapped. John jolted, and with a weak snarl writhed upwards. No bottle for John that night, *oh* no . . .

But John moaned with each intake of breath till well past midnight. Mother passed it down. Their hands touched. She had had it ready, anyway, just in case. She always did. She always would.

Now the ship was nearing Gibraltar and the pincers of the Mediterranean; and now the occasional foreign country would self-consciously present itself for view – over the littered and clamorous sun-decks where Mother dozed and where John sweated and stared and wept. Detailed announcements crackled across the tannoy system. It hurt Mother's mind when she tried to make out what the man said; she just turned and gazed landwards with a listless 'Look, John!' What was out there? Rippling green terraces salted with smart white villas. Distant docklands – once-thriving colonies where a few old limping insects still creaked about. A threadbare slope on which bandy pylons stood waiting. Then, too, the odd stretch of hallowed shore: the line of little islands like the humped coils of a sea-serpent, blank cliffs frowning angrily over the water at the ship, a pink plateau smothered in tousled grey clouds – all of it real and ancient enough, all of it parched, grand, indistinguishable.

In the course of its cruise the ship visited five key cities. During the first four stops John and Mother stayed on board. This was all right: many people did the same. As they approached the final port, however, Mother's anxieties steadied. She resolved to take John ashore. Why not? They were nearly home. Her mind was made up: she would take him ashore, for the experience.

But it was one of John's bad days. The impatient purser brought them tea an hour early, as agreed: and to begin with John simply refused to lift himself from his bunk. Calmly, wryly (this had of course happened before), Mother did what she always did when John was being difficult first thing; she filled his bottle, gave it a forceful shake – that violent drowning sound – and leant over his cot, where she swirled the liquid in inviting arcs above John's head. John prised open his thin scarlet eyes, and shut them again with a moan of – what? – fear? disgust? Mother blinked (this was new). Then with relief she recalled that she had given silly old John an extra half-bottle the night before, to curl up with, to help him sleep. Perhaps he had just lost his taste for it. But – 'Come on my boy,' she said tightly, beginning to heave his soggy legs on to the cabin floor.

The touring-coaches, like a mirage of power and heat, wobbled at the quayside as Mother led John down the gangway and on to the scorched macadam. John stumbled. Mother clicked her tongue contentedly, realising that they would be the first on board. They sat side by side for thirty-five minutes as the coach filled up. The foreign cooling-system made heavy weather of the heat. John shrank back from the canned air, already deafened by the bank of sun that glued him to his seat. Pools formed at all points of contact. Mother watched him, shrewdly supposing that now would be the time to resubmit the glistening bottle to his consideration. But she withheld it until the coach was toiling humidly down the coastal motorway. John held out his hand. He managed two swallows, three swallows. Screaming cars flashed past. John retched and dropped the bottle, his face melting. 'John,' said Mother. He stared at her through his tears for several seconds, then turned his drowned gaze on the boiling sea and its thousand eyes.

Mother hated the town. She hated the fat-trousered, incomprehensibly quacking guide, in whose rumpy wake they dawdled and idled like schoolchildren. Mother hated the lavatorial whiff, the leering touts, the tourists, the stringy lunch at the ramshackle hotel, where the Brines had crouched opposite John and laughed in whispers, making her think of all the pain she had had to deflect on his behalf. John sat tight, motionless, silent, attempting nothing, dead to all his enemies.

After lunch the bowing guide was dismissed (following a round of bitter applause) and the ship's officer told them with the aid of a megaphone that they had an hour to shop and souvenir-hunt before reassembling in the square. Hesitantly Mother led John down an alley, about a hundred yards from the coach bay, and came to a determined halt. She was going no further: something might happen. For a few minutes she dejectedly admired the flamboyant curiosities in the window of a tourist shop. Then she turned and looked up – and at once her spirits climbed. There at the corner of the alley stood a large sign (plain as day, in English) welcoming visitors to the Municipal Aquarium. She urged John forward with some eagerness. John had never been in an aquarium before . . .

The building was small, dark, low-ceilinged and fume-laden; and apart from a kind of baby's swimming-pool in the centre of the room (in which an apathetic turtle grimly wallowed), there were just a dozen-or-so square tanks built into the walls, shimmering like televisions. 'Well what else can I do with him?' thought Mother as, with no real prospect of pleasure, she tugged John towards the first tank and proceeded to shuffle round. Gradually, however, she became pleasantly absorbed and entranced by the unexpected echoes of colour and tone. There were some frilly sea anemone things (all the stickered tags, of course, were in a language she'd hardly heard of) that looked just like Mrs Brine's smart turquoise bathing-cap, with its spiky locks. Coin-shaped mooners bore the same leopard-dots and zebra-flashes as were to be found among the dramatic patterns of the ship's Parakeet Lounge. Flounced, refracted, absurdly dressy fish weaved among the dunce's-hat shells and cracked coral. Three whiskered, toothless old-timers took a constitutional on the turgid surface as, well beneath them in the tank's middle-air, a lone

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silvery youngster flickered about, as if nervously testing its freedom. From the adjacent stalls the lobsters, cripples with a dozen crutches, watched the random activity with malevolence and despair, reaching up boney fingers as if to pluck at their own stark eyes. Teddyboy eels on the sandy floor, straightening their skintight trousers, fish in funny hats with bottomless beads for eyes, crabs like the apoplectic drunks in the Kingfisher Bar . . . Mother was enjoying herself vastly by the time she guided John to the final tank. They stopped; they gazed. There was nothing but an arched hollow of freckled stone, and still water. Mother was about to sigh and move towards the door when a completely nondescript grey fish – a sardine, a sprat – burst from the brown hollow. It stared out. It flew around, seeking the extent of its confines. It paused, darted, paused, as if embarrassed by its own trapped dumb ordinariness. It stared; it stared from the depths of its marinated eternity. With a sobbing gasp John wheeled away from her into the alley and the air, and with violent jolts of his hunched shoulders barked out great cataracts of reds and whites that Mother couldn't for the life of her remember him eating.

The following day, back on board the ship, just before dinner, John got lost for a little while.

John was sitting on the bunk while Mother rinsed his bottle in the bathroom. The connecting door swayed shut in the gentle swell. Shaking the flooded bottle (going, going), Mother opened the door and stepped into the cabin. John wasn't there.

'Oh my darling, what have you done?' said Mother.

Negotiating steep swerves of panic, Mother lurched out into the corridors. A passing white-shorted officer looked at her with concern. She turned away guiltily. Where would he *go*? In a migraine haze her eyes groped through the Parakeet Lounge, the Cockatoo Rooms, the Kingfisher Bar . . . No John. Where would he *go*? Up, up.

John faced the evening alone at the very stern of the ship, a hundred feet above the writhing furrows of its wake. Spreading his arms, he received the bloody javelin hurled at him by the sun. Then, his heavy limbs working slowly, he tried to scale the four parallel white bars that separated him from the sea. Over and over again, as in a drunken dream, he placed his right foot on the first rung, both hands firmly gripping the fourth, and each time he lifted his left foot from the deck he toppled backwards in a heap, and gathered himself up, and placed his right foot on the first rung . . .

Why? What was the sea hissing in his ears? What raw sun tugged at his eyes? His hands grew red and slippery in the salted wind, but still he tried, the right foot, the hands, the left foot, the fall. Mother watched. Mother watched him try – two times, three times. She moved calmly down the steps from the sun deck to the broad stern. She knew that she had won then.

'Go,' sobbed John. 'Go, *go*.'

She walked him down to the cabin. He came quietly. She sat him on the bunk. She started to sing a soothing lullaby. John wept into his hands. There was nothing new in Mother's eyes as she reached for his bottle, and for the gin, and for the clean water.

Short Story by Paul Theroux

Clapham Junction

'The satisfaction of working snails out of shells,' said Cox, 'is the satisfaction of successfully picking one's nose.' He had been hunched over his plate, screwing the grey meat out of the glistening yellow-black shell. Now he looked up and said, 'Don't you think so?'

Mrs Etterick looked at him sideways. She said, 'I'm glad Gina is upstairs.'

But her expression told him that he had scored. Encouraged, he said, 'A horrible, private sort of relief. Like finding exactly what you need at Woolworths. A soap dish. Those plastic discs you put under chair legs so they won't dent the carpet.'

'Now you've gone too far,' said Mrs Etterick.

Rudge said, 'And how is dear Gina? Is she any better?'

'She seems happy. In that sense she is better,' said Mrs Etterick. 'But hers is not the sort of affliction that can be cured. She is so very backward in some ways. I say "affliction" – but that doesn't describe it. She is like a different racial type altogether, like someone from a primitive tribe. Terribly sweet, but terribly uncivilised. I sometimes think what a pity it was, when she was born that – '

Mrs Etterick faced her snails and reproached herself with a shudder.

'There is a kind of light in her face,' Rudge said. 'I noticed it when she let me in tonight. She was standing there like a very serious head prefect.'

'She is nearly thirty,' said Mrs Etterick. 'I still have to wash her face and comb her hair. Head prefects, in my experience, can manage those things.'

Cox had finished his snails. He was smiling at Rudge.

Rudge said, 'I meant there was a gentleness about her, something distinctly proper.'

'She broke a vase this afternoon. She kept asking me where she should put it. I could hardly hear her. She gets very exasperated, awfully flustered. I came down the stairs. When she saw me she started to juggle it. They don't have the same joints in their fingers that we do. Then it went crash.' Mrs Etterick dropped a snail shell with her tongs, as if intending to give drama to what Gina had done. She said, 'I think she did it on purpose.'

'Perhaps a plea for love,' Rudge said.

'Rubbish,' said Mrs Etterick. 'That vase cost less than a pound.'

Cox began to laugh. He was not a man given to expression, but the laugh accomplished his purpose; it complimented Mrs Etterick and it mocked Rudge. But it also slewed in his throat, and it was loud with greed.

Rudge said,'I've always wanted a daughter. Particularly at a time of year like this. Christmas. It seems part of the season.'

'You sound like her,' said Mrs Etterick, rising, collecting the plates. Rudge rose to help her, but she waved him aside, saying that she could manage.

Cox rocked his chair back and yawned. Then he said, 'Those snails were marvellous.'

'It's a sort of kit,' said Mrs Etterick. 'You get snail mince and empty shells in a box. You stuff the shells and heat them through. It's really very simple.'

She returned with a casserole dish on which spills of juice had been baked black on the rim. 'Cassoulet,' she said. 'I put it in the oven this morning. I had to spend the day shopping.'

'When I didn't see you in your office,' said Cox, 'I thought you were home, cooking. Now I don't feel so guilty.'

'I couldn't face the party.'

'It was all secretaries,' Rudge said.

'So you noticed,' Cox replied.

'I noticed you,' said Rudge.

Cox turned to Mrs Etterick. 'Are you going away for Christmas?'

'My plans are still pretty fluid,' she said. 'Gina's been on at me to make a week of it. That's a fairly grim prospect.'

Cox said, 'So you might be alone?'

'I'm not sure.'

The two men ate in silence. Upstairs, the radio was loud.

Mrs Etterick said, 'Gina's transistor. I decided to give her her present early. She *will* leave the door open.'

Cox said, 'I hate Christmas.'

Mrs Etterick filled Rudge's glass with claret and said, 'You'll be spending Christmas here in London, then?'

'I have an open invitation in Scotland,' Rudge said.

'Snow in the Highlands!' said Cox.

'Rain, more likely. The Lowlands – Peebles,' said Rudge. 'It's my mother.'

'Will you go?' asked Mrs Etterick.

Rudge stared, holding his knife and fork, and with hunger on his face he seemed on the point of cutting a slice from Mrs Etterick's white forearm and stuffing it into his mouth. He lowered the implements and in a subdued voice said, 'That depends.'

'Such a lovely house you have, Diana. I hadn't realised you'd such a passion for oriental art. It's all frightfully dazzling.' Cox had finished eating and had lit a cigarette. 'Is this an ashtray, or a funerary urn?'

'Both,' said Mrs Etterick. 'Yes, we were in Thailand. That's where I lost my husband. He was at the university.'

'An academic in the family,' said Cox. 'Forgive me – I wasn't mocking.'

'He was the bursar.'

'Was it one of these tropical diseases?' asked Rudge.

'Yes,' said Mrs Etterick. 'She was about twenty, one of these heartless Chinese girls that are determined to leave Thailand. I can't tell you how beautiful she was. She set about him like an infection. They're in Australia now. I imagine she's quite bored with Richard these days. I got the Buddhas, the bronzes, the porcelain. You could pick it up for next to nothing then. The looters, you know. It was all looters.'

Rudge said, 'I was thinking of staying in

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town over Christmas. Perhaps taking in a show or a concert. Last year, I saw Verdi's *Othello*. Placido Domingo. Overwhelming. I've always wanted to attend the carol service at Saint Paul's. Something traditional.'

'Last year,' Cox said, 'Boxing Day, I went up to the Odeon in Holloway and saw a double-bill. *The Godfather* – both parts. Best afternoon I'd spent in ages. Place was full of yobs.'

Mrs Etterick said, 'I'd like to close my eyes and open them and discover it's January.'

'I'd like to spend the next eight days in bed, watching rubbish on television and eating buttered toast. I mean, really pig it until London's back to normal,' Cox said.

'In Bangkok, you never knew it was Christmas. The heat was dreadful – I loved it. And Gina had an amah then. Amazing, isn't it? They were both seventeen, only the amah was about a foot shorter. But she kept Gina well in check. There were parties, but none of this bogus nostalgia. All the Christmas decorations were in the massage parlours and the brothels – well, that's what Richard told me. The Americans carried on, of course. But they would.'

'I had no idea there was another Far East hand at Alliance,' Cox said.

'Another?' said Mrs Etterick.

'I was in Malaya during the war,' Cox said. 'It was long before your time. But I stayed on. I rather enjoyed the Japanese surrender. It was a terrible shambles. They handed Kota Bahru over to me – can you imagine?'

Rudge said, 'There is so much that we have yet to understand about the east. Yes, I suppose one can treat it all as a great joke. Those funny little people. But our destiny lies in the hands of those funny little people.'

'They go out of their way to insult us,' Cox said. 'They make no serious attempt to understand us. Never did. I have always taken the view that we should offer them all the friendly attention they offer us. I mean, if they turf out our people we should immediately turf out one of theirs. Only language they understand.'

'Who are we talking about?' asked Rudge.

'Orientals,' Cox said.

'You lump them all together.'

'My dear boy, they lump *us* all together. We are Westerners, they are Orientals.'

Rudge said, 'Did Shiner ever tell you that terrible story about his visit to the Canton Trade Fair? It was when Alliance sent that industrial software delegation over, about three years ago.'

Cox said, 'I never speak to Shiner. I don't like his eyes, or his software, for that matter.'

'His secretary had that nervous breakdown,' said Mrs Etterick. 'That spoke volumes.'

'It makes no difference whether we like Shiner or not,' Rudge said. 'The story still stands.'

Cox said, 'Get on with it, then. I can see there is no way of stopping you.'

'Apparently they went all out to impress our delegation,' Rudge said. 'Took them to spindle factories, steel mills, hydroelectric plants. Well, you know. Then they took them to a model commune. The interpreter got hold of the headman and translated what he said. "In five years our cotton acreage has risen fifty-fold," says the headman. "We have increased production of vegetable fibre by two-hundred percent." Shiner was terribly impressed. They inspected the schools, the electricity plant, the kitchens. All this time, the headman is raving about the progress they've made and saying how happy everyone is. "Under the wise leadership of Chairman Mao, we have gone from strength to strength." Shiner signed the visitor's book and said he'd have to leave. "No," said the headman, "there is one more thing I must show you." Out of politeness, Shiner agreed. Then there was a bit of by-play between the interpreter and the headman. The headman said that he wanted to take Shiner upstairs, but that the staircase was very narrow and the room was small and so forth. The interpreter relented, and off they went, Shiner and the headman, to inspect this attic.'

'Now comes the interesting part,' Cox said.

'There was a cradle in this attic. The headman leaned over to Shiner and said, "That is my daughter." He spoke in English! Shiner was astonished, but before he could recover himself, the headman had picked up the child. He was frantic. He put the child in Shiner's arms and said, "Take her with you! Please, take her away from here! You must do this! She has no future here in China!" '

'Is this an ashtray, too?' said Cox to Mrs Etterick. But she was squinting at Rudge.

'Shiner never said a word,' said Rudge. 'He simply put the child back into the cradle and took himself away. But he told me he was really quite shaken by it.'

'I'd divide anything Shiner says by ten,' said Cox.

'The story is true,' Rudge said. 'There were others present. He had witnesses.'

'But there were only two of them in the attic. You said so.'

'I think it is a heart-rending story,' Rudge said. He appealed to Mrs Etterick. 'I sometimes wonder what I would have done if I'd been in Shiner's position.'

'If you'd had any sense you'd have taken the next rickshaw out of the place,' Cox said.

'I'd like to think I was the sort of man who could get that infant out of the country.'

'And where would you bring this ashen-faced tot? To England? What future would she have here?'

Mrs Etterick said, 'Gina was very happy in Bangkok. She hasn't been nearly so happy since.'

'I have nothing so dramatic to offer as Shiner's story,' Cox said. 'I wasn't on a company swan to the Canton Trade Fair. I was in the army, and Kota Bahru was about the grimmest place I'd ever seen. I couldn't imagine why the Japanese had wanted to capture it, or why we were so bloody keen to get it back. But I was an officer and I was put in charge of the reoccupation. What made me think of this? I suppose it was your mention of looters, Diana. After the surrender, Malaya was swarming with looters and Kota Bahru seemed to have more than its fair share. They made me livid. They spent the war hiding behind trees while British soldiers were dying in battle or rotting in prison camps. One day, I was driving along in my jeep. This was just outside of town. I saw a looter running across the road with an enormous great sack. I slammed on the brakes and hopped out of the jeep. And I suppose I yelled at him to stop – I really can't remember. It all happened so fast. I then took out my pistol – the chap was still beetling away with his sack – and fired. One shot. The man fell dead.'

'That's horrible,' Rudge said.

'I was afraid,' Cox said, 'that he might still be alive. He was lying there. I couldn't see any blood. I wasn't even a good shot! I thought he was faking – the way animals pretend they're dead. He flopped over so quickly, just like a rabbit. I kept my pistol aimed at him as I walked over to him, and then I saw that I had got him right through the heart. The blood had started to clot on his blouse. It was a woman's blouse. I imagine he had stolen that, too.'

'What a thing to have on your conscience,' Rudge said.

'Precisely,' Cox said. 'I thought I'd have a terrible night. But not a bit! I went back to my bungalow and ate a huge meal and then slept like a baby.'

Mrs Etterick said, 'And I'll bet everyone blamed you afterwards and said you hadn't any right.'

'Some fools did, but I don't suppose anyone really cared.'

'There's no dessert,' Mrs Etterick said. 'I have some fresh fruit and some cheese, if anyone's interested.'

'I'll help you clear away these things,' said Cox.

'Leave them, please, Austin,' Mrs Etterick said. 'I rather like sitting in the rubble.'

Rudge said, 'Some years, there's lots of snow in Peebles.' He stood up. 'I ought to be off,' he said. 'Are you going? We're both crossing the river. We could share a taxi.'

'I'm going to linger a bit in the rubble,' Cox said. 'But don't let me hold you up.' Now he looked at Mrs Etterick, 'Or would it be simpler if we both left?'

Though it was almost 8.30, it was still dark the following morning as the mother and daughter walked down St John's Hill to Clapham Junction. Mrs Etterick was brisk and silent, keeping four steps ahead of Gina, who was unusually talkative for this early hour. Passing the sweet shops on the hill, Gina remarked that they might buy their chocolate oranges on the way back; at the Granada, Gina said they'd have to see the Disney film – perhaps tomorrow; and there were Christmas trees stacked at the flower shop: Gina fell behind, choosing one. Mrs Etterick had not paused, or replied, and Gina had toiled on clumsy feet to catch up with her. The daughter was big, but had the stumbling round-shouldered gait of a small child. Her eyes were hooded slits in her fat solemn face and her arms swung uselessly in her sleeves.

Gina said, 'After Daddy died and went to Heaven – '

Mrs Etterick quickened her pace.

A crowd of people stood at the ticket window. Mrs Etterick joined them. Now Gina entered the lobby.

'Mum,' she said in a pleading voice. 'After Daddy died – '

'You're talking much too loud,' Mrs Etterick said sharply. 'You'll have to stand in the corner. Over there.'

Gina lugged herself to the corner and waited, murmuring.

It was Mrs Etterick's turn. She put her money down and leaned towards the plastic grille. 'One single and one return to Sunbury, please.'

PAUL THEROUX's *Picture Palace* (Hamish Hamilton) has just won the Whitbread Prize for Fiction.
MARTIN AMIS's most recent novel, *Success*, was published by Cape last spring.

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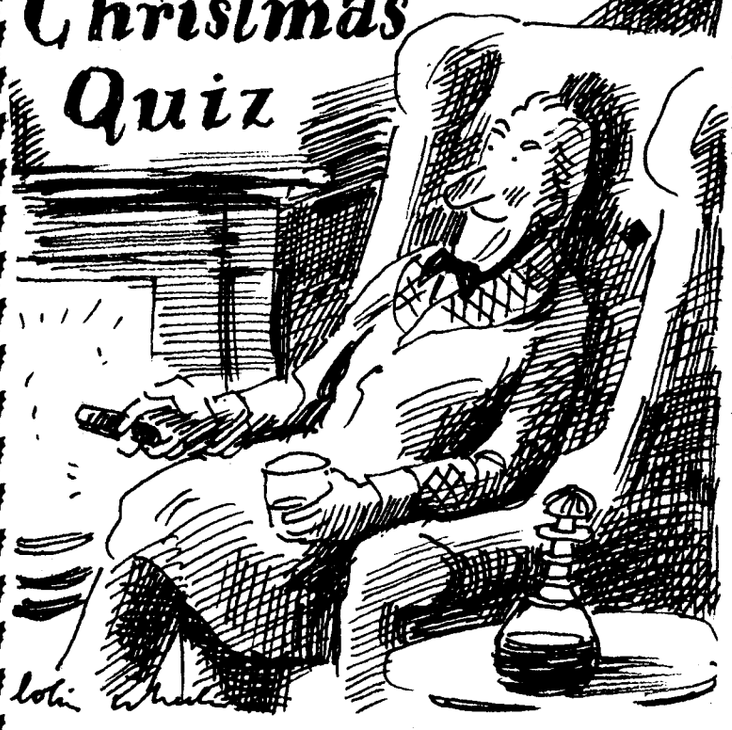
Edward Pygge's Christmas Quiz



I am in indulgent mood this year: something to do with the aromatic fire of pine cones flaring at my feet; something, no doubt, to do with the suffusing warmth of that Special Reserve which is even now seeking out the final capillaries at the edge of my skin. So there are no questions this year demanding knowledge of foreign languages or specialised scientific training. In fact, I can't see how anyone who is half-way interested in current events and has the normal truffling bookishness we expect of NS readers can fail to score something close to full marks. There are even four answers which are repeated elsewhere in the quiz. Should be as easy as ABC now, shouldn't it? Which reminds me (just to get you warmed up), you do know, I take it, who wrote *The ABC of Reading*? Good. And what about *The ABC Murders*? Which of course are not to be confused with the ABC trial (and you can name the defendants in that, if you please). Who said of which actress that she ran the gamut of emotion from A to B? Which Motown group had a big hit with 'ABC' (I'll give you the year – 1970). Who wrote a novel called *A* and, for that matter, a book of 'philosophy' whose subtitle was 'From A to B and Back Again'. Which light Victorian poet wrote of which Romantic poet, 'Good Lord! I'd rather be/Quite unacquainted with the ABC/Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst'? And come to think of it, who wrote, 'Over buttered scones and crumpets/Weeping, weeping multitudes/Droop in a hundred ABCs'? Buttered scones and crumpets, that reminds me . . .but I think *you'd* better get on with the quiz. *Answers: page 893.*

Seventy Eight

Who, this year:

a) Was partly dug up near Vincennes after five centuries?
b) Was disturbed by the colour-coding possibilities of yoghurt?
c) Held his wedding reception in a Baskin-Robbins ice-cream parlour in New York?
d) Was banned in Finland because he had been involved in a common-law marriage?
e) Reached Scotland after completing England and Wales?
f) Almost reached Peking in an MG tourer, having set off from Paris?
g) Predicted, 'I will return from Argentina a millionaire or a condemned man'?
h) Claimed, 'We've never quarrelled with anybody, but lots of people have tried to quarrel with us'?
i) Said, 'A bad review is even less important than whether it is raining in Patagonia'?
j) Published an erotic novel containing chunks lifted from *Fanny Hill*?
k) Wrote a play starring a former member of *The Avengers* and a current member of *The Sweeney* and dedicated it to a former editor of the NEW STATESMAN?

History

Who were responsible for:

1:
a) 1802 (September)
b) 1808 (2 May)
c) 1812
d) 1873
e) 1876
f) 1898
g) 1900
h) 1905
i) 1914 (August)
j) 1916 (Easter)
k) 1919
l) 1939 (September)
m) 1968
n) 1984
o) 1985
p) 2001

2:
a) *She*
b) *We*
c) *They*
d) *US*

3:
a) Alphaville
b) Nashville
c) Orbitsville
d) Andersonville?

Geography

Who are or were:

a) Jill Ireland
b) Ken Scotland
c) Mike England

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d) Philemon Holland
e) Angela Brazil
f) Little Egypt
g) Conchita Montenegro
h) Nancy Spain
i) Dorothy Jordan
j) David English
k) Philip French
l) Edward German?

Side by Side

1:
a) In which novel, published in 1963, is the dead mother of a family of seven buried by them in a brick tabernacle in the back garden?
b) In which novel, published in 1978, is the dead mother of a family of four buried by them in cement in the cellar?

2: Who wrote:
a) Nice things are nicer than nasty things.
b) Nice things are dull, and nasty things are funny.

3: Who wrote of whom:
a) I strove with none, for none
was worth my strife.
Nature I loved, and, next
to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before
the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready
to depart.

b) I strove with all, for all
were worth my strife.
Nature I loathed, and, next
to Nature, Art.
I chilled both feet on the
thin ice of Life.
It broke, and I emit one
final fart.

4: Who wrote, and after whom:
a) As we get older we do not get
any younger.
Seasons return, and today
I am fifty-five,
And this time last year
I was fifty-four,
And this time next year I
shall be sixty-two.
b) When lads have done with
labour
In Shropshire, one will cry,
'Let's go and kill a neighbour!'
and t'other answers, 'Aye!'
c) I saw the best minds of
my generation
Destroyed – Marvin
Who spat out poems;
Potrzebie
Who coagulated a new bop
literature in fifteen
Novels; Alvin
Who in his as yet unwritten
autobiography
Gave Brooklyn an original
lex loci.
d) Winter is icummen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and
staineth slop,
And how the wind
doth ramm!
Sing Goddamm.

5:
a) Who painted *The Last of England;*
Who wrote *The Last of England?*
b) Who painted *A Dance to the Music of Time;*
Who wrote *A Dance to the Music of Time?*
c) Who wrote *Rienzi;*
Who composed *Rienzi;*
Who painted *Rienzi?*
d) Who painted *The Beggar's Opera?*
e) Who wrote the novel *The Sleeping Beauty?*
f) Who compiled the non-fictional *Hard Times?*

Lucky Pleaders

a) Which case was brought to a halt when the plaintiff admitted telling a pack of lies?
b) Which poetess sued a fellow-poet for claiming that she had stolen his ideas?
c) In which trial was a classic modern American novel alleged to have been used in a persuasive fashion?
d) In which case was a much-travelled footballer held not to have been given sufficient opportunity to score goals?
e) Which magazine sued unsuccessfully to stop a television programme from adopting its name?
f) Which newspaper sued unsuccessfully to stop another newspaper from adopting half its name?

Near Enough

Differentiate between:
a) George Scott and George C. Scott;
b) Richard Stern and Richard G. Stern;
c) Jack Higgins and George V. Higgins;
d) Ross Macdonald and John D. Macdonald;
e) John Jones and Jim Jones;
f) Bryan S. Johnson and Brian Johnston.

Puzzled

a) Who asked, How many children had Lady Macbeth?
b) Who asked, What became of Jane Austen?
c) Who asked, Why are we in Vietnam?
d) Who asked, Why was I killed?
e) Who asked, Who do you think you are?
f) Who asked, May we borrow your husband?
g) Who asked, What's become of Waring?
h) Who subsequently asked, What's become of Waring?
i) Who asked, Who cares who killed Roger Ackroyd?
j) Who asked, Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?
k) Who answered, Me, I'm afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Ending Up

Identify the following, all of whom died this year:
a) The critic who first called television 'the box'.
b) A sportsman to whom *The Times* devoted both an obituary and its third leader.
c) A poet who re-joined the Communist Party in support of the Soviet invasion of Hungary.
d) A cartoonist whose middle name was Clerihew.
e) An artist who was a cousin of Lytton Strachey.
f) An American artist who said, 'I just do the things and people pay me very high prices.'
g) A French singer who electrocuted himself while changing a bulb in the bathroom.
h) An English drummer with a habit of driving cars into swimming pools.
i) The leader of the Strict Tempo Dance Orchestra.
j) A sister of Jack Warner who was part of a famous comedy duo.
k) The fighter who escaped a long count at Soldier Field.
l) The weekly companion of Mabel (at the table).
m) The man who claimed, '200 more Messerschmitts would have stopped the invasion of Normandy'.
n) The composer of the theme music of *The Onedin Line.*

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Peter Porter

Those Stay Most Haunting

The God Approached: A Commentary on the Poems of William Empson by PHILIP and AVERIL GARDNER *Chatto* £7.50

I heard William Empson read his poems in public on several occasions in the Fifties and Sixties, and recall his performances with the keenest pleasure as among the most exciting poetry readings I have been to. They were also (and I don't want to add to the legend of his eccentricity) most unusual. At later readings, he tended rather like a disc jockey in Tennessee to outweigh the poems (the discs he was playing, so to speak) with linking talk, but there was never any doubt of the emotional commitment of his performances. When he read 'Missing Dates', all elements of over-familiarity and parody fell away; the Movement might never have been. And he charged 'Bacchus' with the emotion of a Shakespearean tragedian at the height of his power: the most difficult poem in the world became a brazenly baroque speech of farewell by a burnt-out over-reacher. I am quite used to poets pulling out all the stops – Empson's readings were something else again. They reinforced a conviction I built up as I got to know his poetry better: that it is among the most deeply felt as well as the most grandly imagined verse put before the public this century.

That conviction cut across the predominant feeling about Empson at the time. John Wain's essay 'Ambiguous Gifts' told the early Fifties some of the things to look for in Empson's poetry, but those writers who imitated his verse chose only to play with refrains or turn out villanelles. The villanelle is a rather mindless musical form, and Empson's perversely intellectual use of it never seemed more than parody in other men's hands. The sheer difficulty of Empson's poems, which he recognised and which he sometimes apologised for in notes and comments on his work (writing which is escapist because difficult is half-heartedly vindicated in the afterwords to 'Your Teeth are Ivory Towers', for instance), helped conceal the true nature of his poetic gift. It took public readings to put you right.

One of the special pleasures of Philip and Averil Gardner's book is the emphasis it places on Empson's emotional power, and it is a tribute to their originality as academic commentators that they many times quote their reactions to his readings of key poems from the *Listen* record. They also use the sleeve notes to good effect. Their book is the first I have read which establishes Empson's essential grandeur as a poet, though there has been much intelligent exegesis in the past. Empson's poetry seems to me a refutation of the arguments of those critics who say that British concerns, in poetry and the novel, have become piddling (social comedy, adultery in South Kensington, fantasies of the past) when set beside the urge towards epic in other literatures. If we should believe our well-placed academic Jeremiahs, contemporary English Literature has shrunk in the wash. But Empson takes ordinary boy-and-girl miseries, betrayal, sexual fear, even the politics of commercial decline, and fits them out with a metaphorical apparatus of daunting convention and size. He is always careful to keep the facts in sight, yet the result is a poetry of terror imposed on a world of proper social limits.

Empson's work offers an answer to Steinerism: it departs from the plain and known into the empyrean (so many of his final lines are resonantly in the stars), and does not need to cross continents or fill up Broch-like spaces with lexical soup. The Gardners quote Richard Eberhart on the reaction in Cambridge in the late Twenties to Empson's poem, 'Camping Out'. It made his reputation – people were not used to poems which began so laconically: 'and now she cleans her teeth into the lake'. But the originality of the poem lies in its enormous power of modulation, within a few lines, so that it ends as magnificently as anything in Milton or Pope.

> No, it is we soaring explore galaxies,
> Our bullet boat light's speed by thousands flies.
> Who moves so among stars their frame unties;
> See where they blur, and die, and
> are outsoared.

Empson's poetry is very close to his criticism and shares the same erudition and illumination from the past. It does, however, have more passion. A few examples of his power-packed lines will show his connection to the poets of the English Baroque, but they will also reveal his unmistakable originality – such writing is an intensification of the traditional. 'Tour well the slag-heaps, royalty, we own/ The arid sowing, the tumultuous stone'; 'Stars how much further from me fill my night'; 'The sands are shifting as you walk: walk on,/The new is an emptier darkness than the old'; 'Those stay most haunting that most soon deceive'; 'The plains around him flood with the destroyers/Pasturing the stallions in the standing corn'.

Empson was famous when young, was chosen standard-bearer for the Movement at the end of the Forties, and was much praised when his *Collected Poems* was issued in 1955. Yet he seems a good case of the precocious early genius – not dead like Shelley and Keats, not abdicated like Rimbaud, but someone who completed his imaginative cycle by his mid-thirties. It is hard to credit that the author of 'Missing Dates' and 'Success' was in his early thirties when he wrote the poems. Empson, however, is not really a Romantic poet, in the sense that the turmoil of his life feeds power into his writing. He resembles rather those precocious mathematicians who do their best work when very young. I cannot agree with the Gardners' assertion that the basic meaning of 'Let It Go' is the despairing but rational decision to abandon poetry because life's complexities are more than poetry can solve. They identify 'madhouse' in the last line – 'You don't want madhouse and the whole thing there' – as the babble which follows dispute, since 'talk would talk and go so far aslant'. Since Professor Empson is still with us, I shall not presume to guess at his personal motives in the poem, but I go along with G. S. Fraser in thinking that real madness or its possibility is working strongly in the poem. As a Prospero-like renunciation ('Dissatisfaction with Metaphysics' quotes from the great speech in *The Tempest*), it has a blackness and blankness which numb me more than any poem I know. It is an artist's premature farewell, and as such it must surely be allowed to pose some considerable horror as the consequence of persistence in his art.

The God Approached is a skilful, helpful and sensible book in every way. Empson's meaning and his magic do not dissolve into air as the Gardners approach them. Theirs is really a Readers' Guide, since there is very little general introduction; but a thorough and very well documented account is offered of each poem in the Empson canon. The Gardners do not underestimate the difficulty of many of Empson's poems, yet they point out that some are less baffling than they are commonly held to be – part of 'Mandevil's Travels', for instance – and others more complex and inconsistent than their apparent approachability has suggested – 'This Last Pain', for one. They are undismayed, as I think we all should be, by Empson's fondness for mixed metaphors. All good poets mix their metaphors, even if some bad ones do as well. Compression, usually in the interest of poetic density, is the clue to Empson's style. His work is at an opposite pole to the lyrically additive methods of Modernism: he resembles Lovelace more than he does Pound. He argufys (his own chosen word) and he adduces strange examples and proofs, often from science, but he is hardly ever discursive. His loyalty is ultimately to the heavily-laden resonant line.

The Gardners, following Empson's own remarks to Christopher Ricks in their recorded conversation (published in *the Review* in 1963), point out how many of the most riddling of his early poems are love poems. Love poems of a special sort, of course – fear of sex, and fear of what today might be called a relationship, are teased out in brutally condensed metaphors until they (usually) burgeon in a fine afflatus at the end. It seems that what you learn from a despair is how to handle the grand style. Empson's prosody is beautifully his own, and instantly recognisable, but it is made up of well-tried compo-

Among this week's contributors:

ROBERT CONQUEST's collection of literary essays, *The Abomination of Moab*, will be published next year by Maurice Temple Smith.

DAN JACOBSON's latest novel is *The Confessions of Jozef Baisz* (Secker & Warburg).

PETER PORTER's *The Cost of Seriousness* was published this year by Oxford.

IAN HAMILTON's books include *The Little Magazines* and *A Poetry Chronicle*.

CRAIG RAINE is the author of *The Onion, Memory* (Oxford). He was joint winner of the 1978 Prudence Farmer Award.

HUGH THOMAS's books include *The Spanish Civil War, Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom* and *John Strachey*.

JOHN JONES was recently elected Oxford Professor of Poetry.

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nents. The Gardners don't hesitate to pass judgment on his worst and most clotted writing, nor to show where the argument breaks down or the likenesses are forced. In some of the early poems, the compression can reach ludicrous proportions. A line such as 'These frowns, sphincter, void-centred, burst wrinkled hold-alls' reads like a crossword puzzle clue.

A good test of the excellence of the Gardners' arguments is to turn to their examination of 'The Scales'. A love poem again, and a difficult one, it is full of touching observation, as when the lovers make a sandcastle – 'And careful fingers meet through the castle sand'. The analysis given in *The God Approached* seems to me right in every detail, and the rebukes offered to Empson's several inconsistencies are just. But the more one understands the poem, the more one admires the poet's resource under pressure.

> Say (she suspects) to sea Nile only brings
> Delta and indecision, who instead
> Far back up country does enormous things.

Ian Hamilton

Tripping Up

The Best of Betjeman selected by John Guest
John Murray £5 and *Penguin* 95p

It is usual (and quite proper) nowadays to speak fondly of the Poet Laureate, to praise him for his dogged Victorianism, his boyish delight in the obscurest naves and pews, his cuddly appearances on television, his deep but utterly uncomplicated love of England and its God. The poems themselves have gradually become assimilated to this general picture we have of Betjeman the figure, the national institution, and we are accordingly quite fond of them as well. Sir John may now and then be irked by this (it is, I suppose, a sort of critical dismissiveness) but I trust that he would confess that his *has* been a career directed more towards the satisfactions of being liked than those of being 'taken seriously'. And he would probably concede too that the benevolence with which he is now almost unanimously viewed is comfier by far than the atmosphere 20 years ago when his *Collected Poems* was guilty of selling 30,000 copies in two months.

'There's been nothing like it since *Don Juan*,' his publisher John Murray crowed at the time. Men of seriousness, however, took the dimmest of dim views. Although it's hard to imagine now (having lived through the Liverpool poets, the Beats, Adrian Mitchell *et al*), Betjeman's popularity during the late Fifties excited passionate hostility. Needless to say, it wasn't *just* his popularity that stuck in the throats of the more steely critics of the day. He was despised for this, of course, but what really riled the hatchet men (or so they said) was that he'd somehow done the dirt on Poetry by dishing out a sugared substitute for the real thing. The real thing at that time was meant to be difficult, 'committed', and prosodically experimental. Betjeman's stuff was simple, idly snobbish and trippingly traditional in metre. It was also lots of other things: insular, ingratiating, churchy, smug and so on. He was thought by many to be the arch-enemy of What Needed to be Done in poetry. I seem to remember vaguely accepting that this was the case, without having read much Betjeman beyond the odd anthology piece. After all, the indictment sounded pretty well conclusive: popular, rhymes and scans, goes on about tennis clubs and subalterns . . . a clear case, it seemed, of What Needed to be Done In.

Certainly, in the climate of the period – the Movement, the neo-Empsonians, and the prevailing talk about the necessity for poetry to be more intellectually rigorous and self-aware – it came as a surprise when a piece appeared in the magazine *Listen* (almost the house-journal of the Movement) heralding the despised Betjeman as 'surely one of the rare figures on whom the aesthetic appetites of an age pivot and swing around to face an entirely new direction'. The author of the piece? None other than Philip Larkin, by far the most gifted and to be 'taken seriously' of the unfoolable new men. Disconcerting at the time and still to be valued as one of the most effective items of defensive criticism in recent years – but one really shouldn't have been disconcerted. Larkin's defence of Betjeman was more persuasive about the idea of him than it was about any individual poems. And the idea of him was the idea Larkin must privately have had about himself:

> The chief significance of Betjeman as a poet is that he is a writer of talent and intelligence for whom the modern poetic revolution has simply not taken place. For him there has been no symbolism, no objective correlative, no T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound, no rediscovery of myth or language as gesture, no *Seven Types* or *Some Versions*, no works of criticism with titles like *Communication as Discipline* or *Implicit and Explicit Image-Obliquity in Sir Lewis Morris*. He has been carried through by properties and techniques common to all but his immediate predecessors: a belief that poetry is an emotional business, rather than an intellectual and moral one, a belief in metre and rhyme as a means of enhancing emotion, a belief that a poem's meaning should be communicated directly and not by symbol.

Interesting as Larkin on Larkin (and a neat way for him to disown the Empsonian tag), but to set Betjeman up as a lone battler against the excesses and laxities of the Pound/Eliot derived type of 'modernism' seemed – and goes on seeming – over-generous.

Indeed, Larkin's own subsequent performance as a poet 'emotional, strict and direct' in ways that he praises Betjeman for being can be used to define Betjeman's shortcomings. The principal difference between the two poets is that where Larkin uses metre and rhyme as a means of strengthening and elevating ordinary speech, Betjeman more often than not appears to be the creature of his metrical correctness. There are few instances in Larkin where you feel that inversions, elisions or indeed archaic flourishes have been forced upon him by his chosen form (and Larkin's metres and rhyme schemes are nearly always more complex than anything Betjeman attempts), nor do you feel with Larkin that an unwanted jauntiness, a contented regular strum would ever be allowed to disrupt or trivialise a poem whose mood and import was non-jaunty, discontented. A light poem is a light poem and can finger-tap along, all smiles. But there are several moments in Betjeman when he seems to have no means of keeping the 'light' element at bay. At such moments, a measure of freedom from 'a belief in metre and rhyme as a means of enhancing emotion' would, in my view, actually enhance emotion. Two examples. Betjeman writes:

> He died when early April light
> Showed red his garden sally
> And under pale green spears glowed white
> His lilies of the valley.

The inversion is there because of the rhyme, and the trippingness of tone that results fits with the poem's general drift. (It's 'The Hon Sec' – about a devoted golf club employee and starts out, incidentally, with a half-mast flag that 'Seemed animate with being'.) But this is a moment of direct emotion. As an experiment, I re-ordered the last two lines, getting rid of the inversion:

> He died when early April light
> Showed red his garden sally
> And his lilies of the valley
> Glowed white under pale green spears.

Another example.

> This is the lamp where he first read Whitman
> Out of the library large and free.
> Every quarter the bus to Kirkstall
> Stopped and waited, but on read he

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would be drastically altered in tone, in *gravitas*, if the last line were to end with 'he read on'.

In neither instance would one propose that Betjeman should *actually* revise them in this way. The proposition is merely that many rich, heartfelt, beautifully observed moments in his poetry get unnecessarily jauntified by his uneasiness with the tight forms he's committed to.

I think something of this is borne out by certain passages in *Summoned by Bells*, no part of which appears in this *Best of Betjeman* anthology. Overweighted towards the 'ecclesiological' side of Betjeman, it offers a decent selection of the poems and some lively and endearing prose pieces that have presumably been languishing in magazines. But dates should have been given at the end of each piece, and I'd have liked at least some information about which started out as an article, which a broadcast and so on. A good enough means, however, to get to know – and, as invited, get rather to like – him. Don't, though, if you can possibly prevent yourself, go looking for 'one of the rare figures on whom the aesthetic appetites of an age pivot and swing around . . .' etc. etc. Not fair on Betjeman, and positively bad for the stomach (of the age).

Craig Raine

Secondary Worlds

A Vacant Possession by JAMES FENTON *New Review Publications* 50p
Burning the Ivy by TED WALKER *Cape* £1.95
The Fiesta by GEOFFREY GRIGSON *Secker & Warburg* £3.50

On 22 May 1920, a confident e. e. cummings wrote to his father: 'after all, sans blague and Howells, it is a supreme pleasure to have done something FIRST.' No one, probably, would deny Cummings his originality or dissent from this aggressive, if unspecific, denunciation:

> certain ideas gestures
> rhymes, like Gillette Razor Blades
> having been used and re-used
> to the mystical moment of dullness
> emphatically are
> Not To Be Resharpened.

If modernism means anything, it means originality. Picasso exclaimed to his dealer, Kahnweiler: 'It's magnificent to invent new subjects. Take Van Gogh: Potatoes, those shapeless things! To have painted that, or a pair of old shoes! That's really something!'

And yet, while we accept this apotheosis of originality, how many of us have the intellectual *chutzpah* to assent to the inevitable corollaries as they affect, for instance, Renaissance art in general? Picasso again:

> People are always talking about the Renaissance – but it's really pathetic. I've been seeing some Tintorettos recently. It's nothing but cinema, cheap cinema. It makes an impression because there's plenty of people, plenty of movement and *grandiloquent gestures. And then it's all about* Jesus and the Apostles.

Surely, one thinks, this is the *reductio ad absurdum*? Is originality so important that it can banish the output of an entire era to the lumber room?

Just the same, originality *is* important and, ironically enough, it's by this, his chosen standard, that one eventually dismisses Cummings as a major poet. There is little point in being FIRST if there isn't a second or third. And the total absence of followers is easily explained in the case of Cummings. His originality, even as he describes it to his father, is a relatively trivial thing: 'such minutiae as commas and small i's, in which minutiae by Firstness thrives . . .' Strip off the modernist make-up, the distracting false eyelashes, and there is Cummings the old-fashioned troubadour, fearlessly sentimental about flowers and spring and death and love and beauty. His father, keenly unsentimental, called it 'slobber', with particular reference to 'spring omnipotent goddess'. The poet could only appeal to his allegedly transfiguring manner. There is originality and there is top-dressing. No one copies the latter.

A great many poets, though, have followed Auden, including James Fenton. In a recent *New Review*, he argued that the *Collected Poems* represents 'a great pattern-book for subsequent poets to use as they wish'. The theoretical justification for this stance, in Fenton's view, is the example of Auden himself, whose originality is grounded in the extraordinary range of his borrowing: 'Auden's real decline began when he had worked through the whole gamut of possible forms and influences.' A paradoxical account of originality, you might think, but sound enough – except that it is too narrowly technical an account of Auden's genius. True, there is a vast wardrobe of borrowed clothes, but the Anglo-Saxon byrnie, hose and doublet, toga and Jamesian top-hat are effortlessly transformed into the familiar crumpled suit and carpet-slippers because Auden's subject matter was deeply idiosyncratic. He invented new subjects as much as he re-invented old styles.

In Cummings, for instance, children are traditionally innocent; in Auden, they're often guilty and the effect of this innovation is easily traced in subsequent poetry. 'Huge tears are in the pond', Peter Porter's reminiscence of childhood, for example, is also a reminiscence of Auden's 'The boiling tears amid the hothouse plants'. The danger of emulating Auden's technical range, then, is that it is inextricably bound up with his characteristic gifts. You try to borrow a fiver and find yourself in debt to the tune of a fortune. Thus, Fenton's 'The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford' (in his earlier book, *Terminal Moraine*) ends:

> he calmly pushed open the gate
> And entered the wood near the placard:
> 'TAKE NOTICE
> MEN-TRAPS AND SPRING-GUNS ARE SET ON
> THESE PREMISES.'
> For his father had protected his good estate.

But this menacing, unfamiliar ground is, in fact, oddly familiar. We've been here before in Auden's 'No Change of Place':

> Will neither go nor send his son
> Further through foothills than the
> rotting stack
> Where gaitered gamekeeper with gun and dog
> Will shout 'Turn Back'.

The echoes in *A Vacant Possession* are more generalised but just as pervasive, yet there is something identifiably Fentonian. His starting point is Auden's statement: 'Present in every human being are two desires, a desire to know the truth about the primary world, the given world in which we are born, live, love, hate and die, and the desire to make new secondary worlds of our own or, if we cannot make them ourselves, to share in the secondary worlds of those who can.' Those who can, do; those who can't, leech. Fenton can. His fictional worlds impose themselves on us (and on him) as they might on the mind of a madman – which is why the poems are prefaced by an extract from *Rasselas* where the astronomer complains that he has suffered 'chimeras to prey upon me in secret'.

'Song', for instance, continues the nonsense mode of 'Lollipops of the Pomeranian Baroque' and 'The Kingfisher's Boxing Gloves' in his previous collection. It is a short humoresque that examines the night-life of slugs and spiders – an underworld, in fact: 'the slugs / Wind up another night of sluggish trade.' 'Song' is, however, distinguished from other nonsense poetry by the way in which it constantly flirts with meaning: we almost take it seriously because it almost takes itself seriously. The other poems, though very different in tone, are also partly about the relationship of the purely imagined to the real. The last, 'In

This English

Of course, when Times Newspapers closed we all feared the worst. Would 'This English' be dragged down too? Could we survive without our regular injections of illiteracy from *The Times*, the *Sunday Times*, and the invaluable *Times Educational Supplement*? But not to worry. There is still Russell Harty in the *Observer*. There is still the *Guardian*, thank God. There is still the *Telegraph* headline-writer (of whom more next time). And there is still a bulging postbag. May we offer thanks and festive greetings to our sleepless, snake-eyed monitors, who have served us so vigilantly throughout the year? Near-homophones aplenty, and a fine mixed metaphor. £3 for each entry printed.

☐ [The loud crack] happened two or three times again and by then it was accepted as harmless noisome interference. **Russell Harty** *Observer* (M. McIntosh)

☐ Cardinal Hume . . . who was among the forerunners to become Pope, today strengthens his position in the hierarchy of world Catholicism. **Boden Hickman** *Guardian* (M. Rogers)

☐ And it is publishers who are the most vulgar of the breed, pampering to the American money market: there hasn't been a good book for 30 years as far as I can see. **P. G. Hancox** *Evening Standard* (S. Mullin)

☐ 'Nigel is the antipathy of everything that people would expect the Post Office to be like,' comments Jack Rubins, chief executive at Dorlands. *Campaign* (Alec Bristow)

☐ The commission says Reynders initially tried to justify the report, but when its inconsistencies with available facts were pointed out to him he burst into tears and, like a lanced boil, made a clean breast of things. *Financial Times* (A. J. Linnell)

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a Notebook', repeats the same description of a Vietnamese village during the war but offers two alternative endings, the first imagined, the second real. Here, the imagination is seen to be irresponsible. Elsewhere, it is compelling, inventive, a brilliant liar.

'Prison Island' is obviously a fiction, full of poignantly urgent political advice that has been superseded by time, yet delighting in its own dubious status. How can we be moved by the merely invented, it seems to ask. The text of the poem is a letter from a political prisoner on one of the Lipari islands off north Sicily to a friend on the mainland. The time is uncertain, but it's before Garibaldi drove out the Bourbons from Sicily and Naples in 1860-1. It begins:

> That's the Naples packet slipping
> out of harbour
> With a fat Bourbon guard and a hold
> full of capers
> So perhaps my letter will have escaped
> the censors.

But if the poem is the letter, how can it include information about its fate after it was sent? This deliberately gives the fictional game away and allows Fenton his implicit question: how can we be troubled by a chimera?

'Nest of Vampires' imposes on us the scenario of an adolescent about to leave the posh family seat for good, as a result, we infer, of his father's bankruptcy. 'The house is all packed up' and it is real enough, except that, for the boy, it has always been mixed up with fiction – the world of Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, mystery stories and nursery rhymes. The title is, I take it, a lurid illustration of how the boy usurps reality: the large house is viewed through blood-tinted spectacles and leased out to Count Dracula. Though their conversation survives in fragments, real people scarcely impinge on the boy's rapt imaginings of secret rooms and covert signals. The primary world is deposed.

'A Vacant Possession' begins once more with an empty house, but this time the poet is moving in, with bewildering imaginative speed. The furniture is, of course, purely mental, as the sudden time changes make clear. After only an afternoon and night, Fenton writes 'What shall we do the next day?' instead of 'What shall we do tomorrow?' Once again, though, we're convinced by the detail (a mixture of the ordinary and the bizarre) until our disbelief is quite suspended by Fenton's final trump: the narrator goes into his bedroom for something he's forgotten, then can't remember what it is. Given the poet's carte blanche to invent, what could be more convincing than this 'failure' to do so?

Reading Ted Walker's well-made collection, *Burning the Ivy*, I was reminded of the joke about the man who invented television – in 1975. It worked but it wasn't sufficiently original. In order to praise Walker's animal poems, you'd have to forget that Ted Hughes invented animals in 1956. Naturally, there are good lines (Walker's ram has a 'black / scrotum tight with tottery lambs') but even the best have a remaindered feel about them. Moreover, Hughes isn't the only poltergeist throwing his weight around in these poems. Heaney's Grauballe man 'seems to weep / the black river of himself' and we find this trick of self-reference in Walker's 'Logs': 'Dumped from the truck, they / clobber onto themselves.' Frost, however, is the main ghost in this cadence:

> Powdery mortar has begun to fall
> As fall it did our first winter here.

Throughout *Burning the Ivy*, one is aware of a white-haired figure guiding Ted Walker's elbow as he sagely moralises over his various agricultural tasks. But there are also touches of Betjeman ('Between the Acts'), Eliot's 'Burnt Norton' ('*Tendrils* of summer warmth / Clasp October; the leaves *cling*'), the awkwardly reverent Larkin ('I stood apart against an awkward headstone') and Auden's 'Their Lonely Betters' (fish 'do / not know they cannot be mad'). In the end, you feel that literature itself is the really fatal influence.

The Fiesta includes a poem about two weekend painters. Geoffrey Grigson's attitude to them moves through scorn to a muted sympathy, ending:

> handing each other borrowed
> Eyes, repeating what those grand ones painted
> Over and over again. Yet all the same –

Grigson himself is a weekend poet, fond of the vaguely archaic cadence ('And I say "Oh, if you had elected to stay, had / Elected to stay" – liking that form of my words –') yet all the same his volume contains some of those poems that only the old can write, in which experience outweighs the absence of style and the deficiencies of technique. Otherwise, the collection shows that while Grigson has an attractive, crusty personality, he lacks the sine qua non – a poetic personality.

Hugh Thomas

In the Lift

Thoughts in a Dry Season by GERALD BRENAN
Cambridge £6.95

For many years Gerald Brenan wisely kept a commonplace book in which he wrote down phrases or quotations which interested him. *Thoughts in a Dry Season* is a collection taken from that book. The Cambridge University Press has published it attractively and it will make a good, if expensive, book for Christmas. Though the book is beautifully printed and meticulously presented, the publishers have surely foolishly obliged Mr Brenan to omit certain sections, in particular those that deal with history, politics and revolution, subjects on which he writes so well. It is true that readers of Mr Brenan's autobiographies will have gathered a good deal of what he thinks about such matters, but even so the appetite was stimulated, certainly not satisfied, by those books.

As it is, the sections which are now presented to us are almost always pleasing and amusing. One can do little more than quote:

> A bad memory is the mother of invention. Shakespeare, who could put his finger on every word and adage in the English language, forgot all the Latin he had learned at school.

or

> Poverty is the cure for certain kinds of guilt. When I was young and very poor, I looked everyone in the face and felt free.

or

> In my flirtations with religion I have always regarded it as something designed to bless life. For that reason it has never made a strong impact on me. But true religion, the religion that people ask for and get, exists to assure them that there is a meaning and purpose in life as well as a road to be followed which accords with these. Since I have always believed in my bones that life had a meaning and that I had a path marked out for me, I have never taken it very personally. I merely try to understand it and in this shallow and reductionist age to stand up for the rights of other people to believe in it.

Some of the best observations, as might be expected, deal with Spain; for example:

> The *enaciados* were those Spaniards of the early Middle Ages who belonged either to both or to neither religion, the Christian and the Moslem, and betrayed each in turn to the other. They lived on the frontier and sometimes made up whole villages, for instance the Puebla de Naciados in Estremadura. It would seem that I am one of them, placed between Christianity and agnosticism, and with a foot in both camps. But I see no need to choose.

Gerald Brenan is, of course, one of the world's most cultivated men. Having decided to become a writer after the first world war, he settled down to try and educate himself by a programme of reading the world's literature before he set pen to paper. Doubtless that was a mistake for his own literary production, since by the time he published a novel he was already middle-aged. Nevertheless it is his wide reading and affection for nature that make his brilliant books – *The Spanish Labyrinth* or *The History of Spanish Literature* – so much more than simply a study of modern Spanish history or an interpretation of one of the world's great literatures. Those things also make this new book one from which Gerald Brenan's innumerable admirers will draw great pleasure and wisdom. But I wonder what the Spaniards will think of someone who records his dream of 1932 thus:

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I dreamed of tall blocks of flats or skyscrapers in which the floors were rented according to the intellectual energy of the occupants, the most intelligent being on the top. I myself lived in the lift.

Gavin Ewart

There Was a Young Lady

The Art of the Limerick by CYRIL BIBBY *Research Publishing* £4.95

Limericks are popular poetry. Apart from nursery rhymes, pop songs, rugger songs, and perhaps hymns, they are the only pieces of verse with which most people in the British Isles are acquainted. Clerihews for some reason (perhaps because they are rhythmically more subtle and assume a knowledge of the important persons of history) are not competitors. Being popular poetry, a large number of limericks are obscene, a giggle for schoolboys and schoolgirls and a kind of gloss on traditional sex education. In repressive places and periods they have even constituted the only sex education the young ever had, in exactly the same category as the dirty jokes that filter down from the adult world. Without exception they aim at humour, and the best are often 'naughty' in the old-fashioned sense:

> There was a young lady of Kew
> Who filled her vagina with glue
> As she said with a grin
> 'If they pay to get in
> They must pay to get out again too!'

One great virtue of Cyril Bibby's book is that he does not funk the sex words – though I agree with him that cruelty and outstanding perversion (he gives the work of Edward Gorey as an example) are not really suitable content. Yet before one agrees too readily, it's a good thing to remember how successfully Harry Graham's *Ruthless Rhymes* deal with horrific material. It's a matter of style, the degree of serious commitment to sado-masochism, and the personal 'sense of humour'. Everybody finds something disgusting. Swinburne's descriptions of whipping, exciting and pleasurable to an algolagniac, seem boring and revolting to those who don't share his taste. Both male and female homosexuals can find the idea of a man and a woman making love repulsive – and so, apparently, can some of our great religions.

It is certainly true that bowdlerised limericks don't work. It's no good taking the young man of Devizes (whose balls were of different sizes) and substituting other parts of his anatomy. Ms Jean Harrowven did this, in a recent historical survey *The Limerick Makers*. Likewise, unless the degree of wit is very high, all asexual limericks are a waste of time. Langford Reid, for example, one of Ms Harrowven's heroes, wrote limericks of such tameness and obviousness that (for me) they have no interest at all. Arthur Buller's famous relativity limerick, however, succeeds without any hint of impropriety:

> There was a young lady named Bright
> Whose speed was far faster than light;
> She set out one day
> In a relative way,
> And returned home the previous night.

All books about the limerick end up as anthologies. This one contains 750, including what are claimed to be 'nearly 200 completely new ones'. There are many illustrations. There is also a lot of good historical material. On the origin of the name, Bibby reproduces Ms Harrowven's suggestion: limericks in Irish were written by 'priests, pedagogues and publicans' (Bibby's alliteration) in the 18th century in the village of Croom in County Limerick. The most famous of these was Seán óTuama (John O'Toumy). Work by him and others was translated into English, preserving the limerick form, by James Clarence Mangan. This was published in Edinburgh in 1871.

Meanwhile, the English limerick had appeared for the first time in *The History of Sixteen Wonderful Old Women*, an illustrated children's book of 1820:

> There was an Old Woman named Towl,
> Who went out to Sea with her Owl,
> But the Owl was Sea-sick,
> And screamed for Physic;
> Which sadly annoy'd Mistress Towl.

And so to Edward Lear – and (as Bibby suggests) to 'The Owl and the Pussy-Cat'. Lear's limericks were for a short time called 'learics'. Did the indecent ones get called limericks because of the Scots word 'limmer' (scoundrel, strumpet)?

The form, though, is older than that. Ms Harrowven quotes Aquinas's:

> *Sit vitiorum meorum evacuatio*
> *Concupiscentiae et libidinis exterminatio,*
> *Caritatis et patientiae,*
> *Humilitatis et obedientiae,*
> *Omniumque virtutum augmentatio.*

Thomas Moore wrote a very beautiful double limerick, a song containing the lines, 'My only books/Were woman's looks,/And folly's all they've taught me'. One of Browning's poems, 'A Lover's Quarrel', uses what is very near to a limerick stanza. In our day John Fuller has written a rewarding poem about Sade in this form. It is possible, by using long vowels, as in 'Night Scene' by the present writer, to make a limerick solemn:

> There's a slow tolling bell in the dark
> as the keepers are closing the park.
> Like a desert, it's bare;
> and each tree and each chair
> is a blurred indeterminate mark.

I believe (and I'm sure a lot of other people believe) that the liking for the love limericks is sex-linked. They are primarily designed for men. Like rugger songs, they relieve tensions and anxieties by bringing the organs, so to speak, into the open. They say, in effect, 'don't take it all too seriously'. I've never heard of a sex-limerick written by a woman (nor a rugger song for that matter). But perhaps 'Anonymous' covers their blushes. And if anyone (either sex) can get beyond the second line and devise a complete limerick beginning 'There was a young lady of Ulva', I should be very glad to hear from him/her.

Gavin Ewart

The Prize-Winning Poem

I know that God made badgers all
And blessed the hawthorn by the way.
Each animal, however small,
Is there to teach us how to pray,
And every little hedgerow flower
Bears silent witness to His power.

There is a blessing in the rain,
As it descends on me and you,
And in the ripening of the grain
We all can see God's purpose too –
Ah! no escape! We flee, we run,
But He shines o'er us like the sun!

John Jones

Gut & Hair

Haydn at Esterhaza: 1766-1790 by H. C. ROBBINS LANDON *Thames & Hudson* £30

Said Mozart to Haydn, with the latter's English trip in prospect, 'You won't stand it for long and will soon return, for you aren't young any more.' 'But I am still vigorous and in good health.' Mozart was not to be silenced. 'Papa! You have no education for the great world, and you speak too few languages.' 'My language is understood all the world over.'

That sort of talking big was rare for Haydn. So was that sort of standing up to Mozart. His musical deference to the younger man, though never abject, was insistent, almost obsessive. He used to buttonhole and bore the very pants off people who couldn't or wouldn't fully understand the greatness of Mozart. A lovable, absolutely selfless trait. And he practised what he preached. It's a reasonable assumption that he simply stopped writing operas and piano concertos when he came across Mozart's. His own couldn't compete.

Haydn at Esterhaza is the volume in which the two men meet and become friends. Readers who have not been aboard the Robbins Landon Special since the start will ask, with Hardy in *The Dynasts*, 'Where are we and why are we where we are?' Answer: at the last but one stage of the journey. We began with Haydn in England, immediately after the conversation with Mozart which I have just quoted. Then we followed Haydn to Vienna, through the late masses and oratorios. Then the final years.

Now we are moving back in time to the 24-year stint as Kapellmeister to Prince Nicholas I Esterhazy. And we will finish the story at the beginning of the life; *Haydn: the Early Years* is still in preparation. Dr Robbins Landon told me in May that the final volume will be some time coming. His enterprise is vast, and never so obviously vast as in these 799 dense pages. It is as if the entire contents of the Esterhazy Archives, not just from the Castle itself but the Budapest and Hungarian National Libraries, had been emptied over our heads – estimates and receipts, records of singers, players, administrators, the humblest labourers, of opera programmes, brochures, props, of instruments in the mass, singly, and in their parts: pegs, gut, hair, wire, keys, plectra. I recall the boast of an American supermarket: 'If we don't have it, you don't want it.'

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So this is the day-to-day life of supervising a troupe, nursing their morals as well as their musicianship, keeping accounts, seeing to the purchase and repair of instruments, rehearsing, performing, and of course composing – in fact the life of any 18th-century Kapellmeister. But Haydn wasn't any 18th-century Kapellmeister. The wheelwright's son, while professional through and through and in no sense 'above' the world of gut and hair, was also alone, not consciously guarding his solitude like a Romantic creator, but simply alone:

> I was cut off from the world; there was nobody in my vicinity to make me unsure of myself or to persecute me: and so I had to become original.

That's our man all right: 'I had to become original.'

These are momentous years for the development of the classical symphony, and perhaps even more amazing in the history of the string quartet, for Haydn not only fathered the form but produced its first decisive masterpieces in his Opus 20 set. In having to become original he was driven by his enormous talent, just as he drove himself with a capacity for work which, at the level of secondary creation, has rubbed off on Dr Landon. This is a massive achievement, and, if we couple with it Dr Landon's work on Haydn texts, notably on the symphonies, an achievement difficult to match in modern musical scholarship.

But I must say that *Haydn at Esterhaza* gave me less pleasure than its predecessors. Despite some fine and shrewd things, and some wise borrowings from Donald Tovey and others, I felt rather as Dr Landon feels about Haydn's *Applausus* cantata: 'too dry, too long, and the whole subject not exactly calculated to uplift.' There is just too much stuff. Gut and hair, in fact.

Helen McNeil

A Severed Head

The Origin of Table Manners by CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS *Cape* £12.50
Myth and Meaning by CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS *Routledge* £1.50
Mysteries by COLIN WILSON *Hodder* £9.95
The Occult Source Book by NEVILLE DRURY and GREGORY TILLETT *Routledge* £7.95 and £4.95

In Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Origin of Table Manners*, every story tells a picture. The Tucuna tribe talk about Monmanéki, a man who had five exotic marriages, all failures. The Tembé, the Cashinaw and others tell of a severed head that rolls after its victims, devouring their food. In an Arapaho myth, a beautiful girl marries a painted porcupine and lives happily, if carefully, ever after. At least 86 North American Indian stories describe how a girl goes to live in the sky with her star-husband, but digs a forbidden root which opens a hole in the firmament beneath. Suddenly homesick for Earth, she tries to descend, but her rope is too short and she falls to her death.

According to Lévi-Strauss's system of structural anthropology, these vividly different tales are 'about' the same structures of knowledge and are represented by the same complex diagrams. The tales all deal with cosmological, sociological or anatomical fields of meaning, and some, in a *tour de force* of intellectual graphics, are shown to deal with all three fields at once. At times, in fact, the very comprehensiveness of Lévi-Strauss's abstract structures appears to take them over into a kind of transformational play which exists for its own sake.

It's no wonder that structural anthropology has influenced literary criticism (or used to influence it: *The Origin of Table Manners* was first published in France in 1967, and it is the third of the four-part *Mythologiques*). In fact Lévi-Strauss is writing about linguistic codes and literary form from the outset. He has a linguistic not a literary attitude towards the text. Ambiguity in a given myth is resolved by its relations to other mythic codes or 'semantic fields' of reference. This search for a common structural denominator means that there is no organic form to a myth, and no authoritative version. In the myth of Monmanéki's marriages, he and his brother get in a canoe to pursue his fourth wife, a macaw-woman. Lévi-Strauss refers this narrative fragment to other myths from Amazonian tribes in which the structural element of two men in a boat does appear to refer to a semantic field of the proper distance between the sun and the moon. *Ergo*, this is what the little canoe bit is 'about'. But as empirical (Anglo-Saxon) anthropologists have pointed out, this sort of cross-cultural splicing neglects what the myth may mean to the people who tell it to each other. If the Tucuna hardly mention two brothers in a canoe, perhaps they are coming to grips with sun-moon relations in some other way. Perhaps rivers interest them more than skies. Perhaps this episodic style of myth marks a degeneration of their culture. Lévi-Strauss doesn't say.

In this world at one remove beyond myth, values can be transformed freely so long as a semantic field of reference has been established. For there is never a final meaning to myth, only the beautifully lucid structure that appears when the listener 'stands back' (a favourite Lévi-Strauss expression). Thus the sun, whatever its value, must always be all one thing or all another: cannibalistic monster to one clan, benevolent father to the next. The periodic moon, on the contrary, occupies the semantic field of unsteadiness and ambivalence: the lawgiver-trickster; the virgin; the sterile woman; the impotent man; the hermaphrodite. At this distance the structure is marvellously revealing. It must be a token of Lévi-Strauss's success that *The Origin of Table Manners* is able constantly to suggest 'primitive' ways of thought for literate narrative structures. This ease is all the more impressive when one considers the incredible gap between oral narratives, which exist in time and memory, and Lévi-Strauss's abstract graphics, which are perceived in a space conditioned by centuries of illusionist perspective.

As the after-dinner booklet *Myth and Meaning* makes clear, the impulse behind Lévi-Strauss's structuralism is humanist. Myth is primitive only in its instruments. It is a type of meditative 'disinterested thought' which is just as available to a people living at subsistence level as it is to us. The only difference is that in the pre-scientific world knowledge was not conceived in such a way as to confer power over nature.

Like the Enlightenment mythographers whom he uncannily resembles, Lévi-Strauss sees myth as knowledge, not belief. His structurally comparative model of investigation does not require reference up to higher truth or back to origins. For Lévi-Strauss, anthropology is about the shape of the human mind, and 'the human mind is everywhere the same'. If structural anthropology forms a series of episodic proofs of the common concerns of mankind, and I think it does, then Claude Lévi-Strauss has indeed achieved one of the noble and traditional goals of the *philosophe*.

In *Myth and Meaning* Lévi-Strauss places himself amid the great tradition of French intellectual autobiography by revealing that structuralism began when he noticed, at the age of three, that *boucherie* and *boulangerie* have something in common. In *Mysteries*, Colin Wilson reveals that the germ of his subjective compendium of psychology and the occult began when he was trying to write over 3,000 words a day for a compendium of crime. Wilson kept waking up in the night with a terrible sense of anxiety. Standing back from this tale, it seems to be about the consequences of trying to write too much dreck too fast, but for Wilson his 'panic effect' came from a weaker personality and required a supra-natural cure, which he calls 'the school-mistress effect'. The rest of his 667-page book is a similar mélange of willed over-reading and gullible summary. Kabbalism, hermeticism, gnosticism and alchemy are relatively unsympathetically treated, probably because they are related to major religions and so aren't entirely prey to the whims of the post-rational mind. Beginners seeking occult knowledge – and if you are still finding it in books, you are a beginner – would do better to consult the alphabetical entries in Neville Drury and Gregory Tillett's *The Occult Source Book*. The entry on the Kabbalah thoughtfully divides into 'academic sources' and books by occultists, so that the reader who is afraid he might find out altogether too much from Gershom G. Sholem's magisterial *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* can dip into a zanier brew of Kabbalism concocted by Aleister Crowley's former secretary.

Modern occultism of the sort enthusiastically described by Colin Wilson is not about knowledge, however non-scientific, but about not knowing. Again and again its structure is that of horror: the small lit room reminding one of the dark limitless space beyond and beneath. For Ramakrishna or George Russell the outer space is a joyous indefinite realm; for Aleister Crowley or Pierre Janet's hysterical patient, it is the Devil. But no matter. With so much space outside, a puny fantasy can rebel against its self-imposed limits and hope that it has found a unique satisfaction. With effort it can achieve imaginative poverty and become a veritable Cinderella, fulfilling herself beneath the roof.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Kith of Life

A Wedding (AA) *Studio, Oxford Circus; Cinecenta; Odeons, Kensington, Swiss Cottage and Westbourne Grove, from 28 December.*
Superman (A) *Warner West End 2*
The First Great Train Robbery (AA) *Leicester Square Theatre.*
Dog Soldiers (X) *Scene; Classic, Oxford Street; London Pavilion*

Robert Altman's latest movie may not defy description, but it has a damn good try. Some three years ago, his *Nashville* already had me in a tizzy, when I wrote of his 'giving the impression of throwing a gate-crashed party on to the screen', with us, of course, the audience, as willing, bemused, always entertained interlopers. As it turns out, the self-quote might have been coined for *A Wedding,* which has something approaching 50 speaking parts and carries us beguilingly from a marriage ceremony, through the subsequent messy celebrations back at a grand house, down to the departure of the honeymoon couple and, incidentally, of the father of the groom as well. It is a *tour de force* of family disunion, of having your kin and hating it.

There is rather more structure than in, say, *Nashville* or *California Split* or even *Three Women*: partly ensured by the ritual implied in the title, partly by the different social backgrounds of bride and groom. Muffin Brenner (Amy Stryker) comes from millions made by dad as a Kentucky trucker, Dino Corelli (Desi Arnaz, Jr) from an upper-class Lake Michigan background. At least, his morphine-addicted mother, Regina (Nina van Pallandt), is thoroughly 'U': his father, Luigi (Vittorio Gassman), is widely thought to have had Mafioso connections but was actually an Italian waiter picked up by mummy while vacationing years back. And it is mostly from this last fact that a certain circular neatness emerges. Regina's dying mother, Nettie (marvellous pillow-talk from Lillian Gish), snuffs it just before the main party returns from church; at the end of the mad day, Luigi explains in a splendid monologue to her corpse that he now feels free to leave – he has fulfilled his side of their long-ago bargain. It is tenderly done.

In between, a kaleidoscope of hell and humour is twirled. One of Altman's nicest touches is to have introduced exactly *one* authentic guest, William Williamson (Bert Remsen), our stand-in, and he probably unasked, a beaming free-loader. Evidently, the two families are kookily such as to have provoked society's cold shoulder. Geraldine Chaplin, as Miss Billingsley, wedding coordinator and – in a brief farewell scene with the bride – sad lesbian lady, admits of the telegrammed regrets, 'a few more than a hundred'. So, back at the house, the receiving line has to enlist family and servants to pass down it, another rite mocked. Sweet Muffin has braces on her teeth, seen for the first time as she utters her marriage vows before decrepit old Bishop Martin (the 92-year-old director, John Cromwell, having a ball): one sequence, where he takes the stairs a step at a time towards the loo, accompanied by a frenziedly courteous security man relaying their progress to his tough colleagues via a walkie-talkie, is sheer comic inspiration. A crunch comes when Muffin's fey, near-mute sister, Buffy (Mia Farrow), is found to be pregnant, and by the groom. Two distinct family get-togethers now take place. One has the Kentucky father and his lot summoning young Dino to explain: ex-military academy, the lad has to go ungallant: 'Just about everyone in the barracks did, too,' at which Buffy, having used her own fingers, has to borrow other hands to count up her lovers. The second concerns Grandma Nettie's death, quiveringly announced by an aunt (Dina Merrill) to a roomful of people who are already on to what was supposed to have been kept secret till then.

Not so incidentally, that aunt's husband, Mackenzie (Pat McCormick, a huge fatty and writer, previously turned actor for Altman), has devoutly fallen for the bride's mother (Carol Burnett, in a rare and smashing movie appearance): 'Tulip, my love for you is like a shrine', and, literally swept off her feet, she agrees to an assignation in the greenhouse in ten minutes, and to a dirty weekend two weeks later. Also figuring in this flux are a tacky camera crew covering the event (Lauren Hutton supposedly in charge); whacky Viveca Lindfors as head cateress, stoned out of her mind on pills and whirling around declaiming, 'Death is a four-letter word'; a dignified black houseman, having an affair with Dina Merrill's sister; a big, gay military lad who makes the most of sobering the groom up under a shower; a left-wing great-aunt, whose present is a nude portrait of the bride; and, floating throughout on a tide of booze, Howard Duff as the family physician, Doc Jules. All his lines are great ('If you'll excuse me, I'm probably needed in another ward'), but this beats the others out of sight with the festive season upon us. Glass in hand, he addresses an avowed abstainer. 'You mean, you don't drink. In other words, when you get up in the morning, that's as good as you're going to feel all day?' As usual, the unique, risk-taking Altman – characters roughly outlined – lets in a fair amount of verbal improvisation, to be shaped subsequently. Not everything works, but more does, for pleasure and the odd, stinging qualm, than in any other movie I can recall this dying year: and, at that, one has only skimmed the surface of *his* surface.

'Look! Up in the sky. It's a bird! It's a plane . . .' Those who experience a throb of something or other on reading these words will need no encouragement to make tracks for *Superman,* an extremely expensive curate's egg; indeed, the curate in question could well have blood-ties with Fabergé. Limitations on space and my own faint revulsion at the quantities of money forked out on the creation of this biggie brings me to a short-cut suggestion. For details financial and effing silly, purchase an excitable paperback, *The Making of Superman, The Movie*, by David Michael Petrou (Universal 75p). As a further enticement, let me quote Mr Petrou praising the typical doggedness and craft of our domestic film crews: 'that peculiar amalgam that produced Shakespeare, the Battle of Britain airmen, and the Sex Pistols.' Gosh. Still, considering the volume of loot expended, this *Superman* – directed by Richard Donner, whose other credit of any import seems to be for *The Omen* – has its decent ration of high-flying and low-comedy moments: it is not the flop one had confidently anticipated, after rumour had set it up as a far more substantial operation than D-Day. A sequel, of course, is promised (much of it already in the can), which accounts for some very loose ends here, if not excusing them. For what success it should have, it relies on three noteworthy performances and a deal of trick-effects, *almost* all of which come off: also, John Barry, as production designer, merits an accolade.

Really, there is a trio of film-styles on view. We open on the crystalline, stalagmited planet of Krypton, which is about to disrupt: this is a staggering pair of set-pieces, of vastness and strangeness (money seen to be spent) and there is Brando, quietly using his best British accent to effect, as reasonable Jor-El, father of Superman-to-be. That impressive dream-area spectacularly disintegrated, we are into what has been variously described as Andrew Wyeth or Norman Rockwell territory, swishing corn-fields and the baby Superman growing up with nice mid-western Glenn Ford and Phyllis Thaxter, propping a truck with two infant's hands. Grown to 18, kicking a football miles and racing an express train, he is gently admonished by Ford: 'Been showing off a little, haven't you, son?' Time to leave foster-home, high time, since this rural-lyrical episode is over-extended. Twelve years on, after crypto-Kryptonic training for his destiny, and Clark Kent is taken aboard at *The Daily Planet* in Metropolis. This is the Superman we are to stay with for the rest of the doings and he is perfectly played by Christopher Reeve, keeping a delicate balance between straight and camp.

The movie proper starts here and, with an abrupt rush of good sense, has Clark – after an aghast look at an open-style phone-kiosk (useless for changing) – coming S-cloaked through revolving-doors to perform five impossible things in what seems as many minutes: rescuing Lois Lane (Margot Kidder, the other remarkable bit of casting), ace reporter, when her helicopter defaults; swooping to pick a human-fly burglar off a sky-scraper; hauling a boatful of villains on to city streets; de-treeing a pussycat for a child; and saving a Presidential plane on fire. The subterranean lair of evil Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman) and his hopeless Otis (Ned Beatty) and sexy Miss Teschmacher (Valerie Perrine), somewhere under the equivalent of Grand Central station, is quite a construct; and a lot more plot stems from it, atomic missiles being used to slice off a chunk of California's coastline and Superman everywhere at once, diving into volcanic, fiery regions, holding rail-tracks together, even – grown angry – turning the clock backwards by girdling the earth several

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times (a kind friend tells me, in the wrong direction, but what the hell?) when a dam has burst and Lois is dead. This is officially cheating, since Superman is not supposed to alter history: but – again my source is private – all will be righted in the follow-up. My own largest enjoyment came from stuff between Lois and Superman. Landing softly on her roof-top patio at night, he grants her an interview, clearly a shade enamoured, helping her with her awful spelling, X-raying her knickers as pink, and her lungs as sound (she smokes too much), turning down hospitality ('I never drink when I fly'), and taking her on a soppy Peter-Pan flight round the Statue of Liberty while her voice, mouth unmoving, intones a song-spiel, 'Can You Read My Mind?' The overall message is resonant: 'I'm here to fight for truth and justice and the American way.' Thank Margot Kidder's appearance for helping, ever so importantly, to undermine this po-faced banality.

The late, lamented, brilliant British lighting cameraman, Geoffrey Unsworth, did *Superman* and both it and Michael Crichton's pretty genial *The First Great Train Robbery* are rightly dedicated to him. This thieves' romp, which Crichton also wrote (as he doubly authored the recent *Coma*), has two dicey elements: one terrible shot with St Paul's in the background and some improbably spicy dialogue between Edward (Sean Connery) and a banker's wife, full of screwing and erections and 'proper tools'. Elsewhere, it is replete with visual affection for London as imagined around 1855, when monthly shipments of gold bullion were entrained to Folkestone on their way to the Crimea. In fact, one chase-scene serves little other purpose than to display a doss-house, East End low-life and streets. The Reform Club's library is where bad Edward picks up his hints as to the four keys necessary to ripping off the guarded railway-van en route. Donald Sutherland, fingers cracking, a picker of pockets and locks, is enlisted, as is Wayne Sleep (great dancer-turned-actor) as cat-burglar extraordinary: Lesley-Anne Down is literally to hand as Edward's girl friend and general busybody. Lightweight and harmless.

Hanging justice to Karel Reisz's *Dog Soldiers*, apparently a faithful adaptation of a 1974 novel by Robert Stone, which concerns Vietnam home-comers involved in a smuggling from Saigon of 'two keys of scag' (two kilograms of heroin, to squares out there). The initiator is an utterly disillusioned war correspondent, Johnny; the carrier, a toughie, Ray (Nick Nolte), who soon finds himself on the road to LA and New Mexico with Johnny's wife, Marge (excellent Tuesday Weld), a pill-popper and freak. There are some horrifying torture scenes; there is a single tremendous notion, which has Ray and Marge on the run finally holing up in an old hippie hide-out, dating from '65. Ray had wired it for *son et lumière* in the past and a confrontation with a crooked CIA agent and his hoodlum henchmen is enacted against full blasts of pop music and lights across a canyon. What can a road-show like this do, though, but come to a sticky end? And the moral is, 'Nam made the world perverse and worse.' It can't be so simple. But the new Cint Eastwood, to be treated next time round, implies brutal is best. The sands of space are running out, and a week of rest must intervene before I confront that troubling, frangible but undeniably important piece, *Jaws 2*. Merry Christmas.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Two Cheers

The Hang of the Jail *Warehouse*
A Night with Dame Edna *Piccadilly*
The Millionairess *Haymarket*
A Respectable Wedding *Open Space*
Herod *Cottesloe*

For the motto inside Howard Barker's Christmas cracker we need look little further than part of a manifesto he published a few years back: 'every moment of reconciliation between the audience and its society is a misuse of the theatre and a betrayal of its purpose'. Needless to say, there's no such danger at the Warehouse, where all is social alienation and unseasonal rancour. A fictitious Dartmoor has been razed by a fire that turns out to have been started by its governor, a disillusioned upper-crust do-gooder with a taste for that author who, it seems, sums up for Mr Barker all that is spongiest about English tolerance and decency, namely E. M. Forster. A government inquiry meets on the ruins, with the expected result. It uncovers its politically embarrassing truth, and then promptly covers it up again, shifting the blame on to a prisoner who has convinced himself that he is freer in jug than 'the whole population of Surrey' in its chintz chains. For this service to humanity the committee chairman is duly knighted, on the say-so of a Home Secretary whose own leftist convictions have come to amount to no more than a bleary, impotent class-hatred. 'We didn't pick the system,' declares this bluff, breezy and, in Christopher Benjamin's performance, somewhat Callaghanesque monster, 'but we've got to get the hang of it.'

The Barker trademark is stamped all over the play. It's in the oddly stylised speech of the nobbier characters: 'a bucket-pisser did this in some kidney of the wing', 'this fire burned on the liquor of our sins', and so on. It's in the personal weaknesses, the internal discord ascribed to those who represent authority: at one scarcely credible point Fulton MacKay's drunken, vile-mouthed chairman actually wrestles in the mud with Gaye Brown's lady deputy, punching her for presuming to doubt his sexual virility. Above all, it's in the inference that, weak or strong, kindly or sadistic, socialist or conservative, almost everyone is trapped, defined and morally scuttled by a system that needs changing, not 'getting the hang of' and trying to liberalise. And if this makes the play sound as if it's a quivering finger platitudinously pointed at obvious targets or a fist raised for a well-accredited cause – well, if so let me add that Mr Barker's imprint is also apparent in the not-unsympathetic characterisation and the quirky inventiveness that can send a young civil servant, unnerved by his own forensic violence, off on to the moor to squirrel and root for food like Shakespeare's Edgar. *Hang*, in short, is predictable and unpredictable, overblown and yet dense, pretentious in places and more authentically ambitious than anything its frankly paradoxical author has concocted to date.

Those who have patronised Barry Humphries as an insular marsupial in drag should get their come-uppance at his latest one-man shindig. He has it in for England too. True, his programme begins with three distinctive Australians: Les Patterson, the scrotum-scratching cultural boor with the suit that looks as if it's just taken a swim in Copydex; Lance Boyle, a spectacularly corrupt trades union yobbo and his most scathing creation so far; and, for pathos, Sandy something or other, whose mind is still rustling dimly up and down the suburban narrows the day after his body is ritually calcified at the local crematorium. But, as this last item makes clear, Mr Humphries's satiric ambit embraces East Grinstead and Wilmslow as well as the ornamental ponds of outer Melbourne. And his Edna Everage, who soon afterwards swans onstage gaily (and oddly) dressed for the tennis court, takes a markedly more jaundiced view of our green and pleasant land than she did a bare two years back.

She is still the embodiment of philistine chic, still the supercharged housewife whose godliness actually *is* cleanliness and whose latest furnishing idea is a set of dinner mats emblazoned with *The Scream* by Munch – 'or do I mean *The Munch* by Scream?' Her husband Norm, 'the darling of the urological ward', is still having post-colostomy problems, and she herself is still wincing at the after-effects of 'being probed by a top man'. She still slings gladioli at the audience, and still spouts plenty of funny-fastidious lines: using Badedas is 'like popping into the tub after someone with a heavy cold'. But her description of a visit to the South London terrace of her detested daughter-in-law, Joylene, has at least two satiric targets. One, of course, is Edna herself, the nosy, prurient suburbanite who finds the top of the Dr Scholl's verruca cream on the toothpaste and worries that her son will get athlete's teeth; but the other is the plant-infested, macrobiotic life-style of her by now very anglicised progeny. Coming into their messy-smart domain is like 'stepping into a very old *Sunday Times* special-offer Lowry print'. Mr Humphries's act has always been brave and imaginative: selective anglophobia promises to make it an increasingly formidable one, too.

'A diamond' was the *TLS*'s opinion of the text of Shaw's *Millionairess* back in 1936, one which 'might well succeed in the theatre as an adornment for an actress who knows how to show it off'. Well, Penelope Keith certainly has the burly charm, the brusque and peremptory charisma for Epifania, the female Midas whose Undershaft touch ruthlessly prunes and primes two failing businesses. But even Michael Lindsay-Hogg's clear-cut revival is unlikely to convince many people that it is as hard, brilliant and cutting as the reviewer from Printing House Square believed. On the

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contrary, it often seems wordy, laboured, and as confused as one might expect, given its author's political uncertainties during the Decade of the Dictators. At the end, when Epifania imperiously nabs an Egyptian doctor for her spouse, Shaw would seem to be postulating some sort of reconciliation between the efficient and the humane, the able and the good, waggishly (and characteristically) giving the tougher virtues to the supposedly weaker sex, and vice versa. Unluckily, the character of the husband-elect, as of everyone in the play except the bitch-heroine herself, is so sketchy and skimpy that this portentous merger amounts to nothing more than the kind of fragile, romantic final-curtain botch-up that Shaw himself despised; and an unsentimental debate dwindles into what both Mr Hogg and Miss Keith make conscientous efforts to prevent it becoming, a soggy setting for a television star.

Quickly, *A Respectable Wedding* is early Brecht, a Bavarian folk-comedy hardened into a satiric assault on the lower-middle class at one of its more loveless rituals. At times, especially when the young husband's honky do-it-yourself furniture is hilariously spilling his guests on to the floor, you might almost mistake it for late Ayckbourn; and it is all directed with immense humour by Mike Ockrent. *Herod* is a short piece by Paul Mills and Harrison Birtwistle, the preciosity of which is summed up by the entry of the musicians, who inexplicably tack and weave like small boats to their places, where they proceed to birtwistle quaint little numbers on sax and percussion. Such of the play as exists, which isn't much, is far too literary and lifeless to recommend to anyone, child or adult. It makes, in fact, a thoroughly inappropriate code to what's actually been rather a good 1978 at the South-Bank Oz we had come to call Castle Despair, Gloom Grange, or, more simply and accusingly, Peter Hall. Ironically enough, because this was also the year when John Elsom's trenchant analysis of the place was published, the National has given as the two best new plays, David Namet's *American Buffalo* and Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*, and the finest revival, Congreve's *Double Dealer*. And if it half-persuaded me that Galsworthy's *Strife* wasn't as strong a piece as I'd thought, it also convinced me that I was wrong to dislike Shaw's *Philanderer*.

What else? Gray's *Rear Column*, like *Betrayal*, was stupidly underrated; but other top talents, including Bond, Storey, Barnes, Wood, Mercer, Hare and even Stoppard, were not on peak form. Bill Morrison's *Flying Blind* was the best play by a relative newcomer, followed by Peter Flannery's *Savage Amusement*, in which David Threlfall established himself as a fresh face of striking promise. Michael Bogdanov's mischievous *Shrew*, with Jonathan Pryce as an all-electric Petruchio, was the most exciting thing produced by the RSC, which itself had a very good year instead of the usual excellent one. On the plus side, the Warehouse continued to prove itself, and small spaces in general, absolutely essential. On the minus, the Brook *Anthony and Cleopatra* had a ration-card austerity about it. The best performances were Diana Rigg's forlorn romantic in *Night and Day* and, as 14 years ago, Nicol Williamson's Maitland, all middle-aged disarray in a play that once more proved how much was lost to the world when the noble name of John Osborne was purloined by the drowsy blimp who now sports it.

Television

Julian Barnes

Up for the Cups

You may be relieved to hear that during the whole of this year's viewing – with all the retinal disfunctions, cushion sickness and empty packets of KP nuts this entails – I haven't spotted a single Trend in Television. There are professional Beeb-watchers, hawk-eyed for Trends, who are still kicking around Whither Annan (and very important I'm sure it is too); but we professional tube-watchers take the larger view, try to assess the totality of pleasure and information that slurps into your telly-den through the plug-in Cloaca Maxima. That's what we tell ourselves anyway. Next year, perhaps, the current drain of BBC personnel may start to affect quality (it's not the loss of Brucies and Eric and Ernies that matters, but the defection of technicians; in a single week 15 make-up girls left the BBC and joined Thames; 40 videotape engineers left in a year). So far, though, there's yet to be a discernible slide; colour TV at £21 a year has been terrific value, and the NEW STATESMAN'S Christmas Awards are roughly shared between all three channels.

In conventional categories, the most interesting writer to emerge in 1978 was Trevor Preston; the best documentary, Roger Graef's *Decision: British Communism*; the best interview, Melvyn Bragg's with Pinter; two of the top acting performances, Tom Bell in *Out* and Gemma Craven in the disappointing *Pennies from Heaven*. The worst show (probably ever) was Granada's *M'lords, Ladies and Gentlemen*; and the most needlessly killed programme Brian Redhead's patchy but always improving *Don't Quote Me*. In special categories:

Most Revealing Fact: that 35 calls about a show produce an 'LWT Switchboard Jammed' headline.

Least Disinterested Remark: 'I just don't think the critics like watching anything any more' (Esther).

Ego Award (for actors who confirm all you've heard about actors): shared between Tom Bell, for dumping on *Holocaust* while living off its pay-cheque, and Rebecca Saire (BBC-2's Juliet), for a long interview in the *Daily Mail* beefing about her tyrannous director and bragging that, though a virgin, she had the instinctive sexual understanding of a woman of 25.

Watergate Prize (for best technical idea): bugging the Cambridge cox for the Boat Race (BBC-1).

Broken Bottle Award: Ian Trethowan, for banning the repeat of *Gotcha* after being Whitehoused; runner-up, the director who pulled the plug on the Cambridge cox at the first truculent 'Bloody' (what did he say at the sinking).

Best Audience Participation: the heckling of Isobel Barnett during LWT's *Golden Gala*.

F. R. Leavis Memorial Jug: Erin Pizzey.

Church of England Chalice (for Sunday morning programmes most likely to encourage the revival of religion): *Nuts and Bolts of the Economy* (Granada).

Hubris Award: David Coleman, back empty-handed from America, doing the half-time scores on Frank Bough's *Grandstand*.

Titanic Award: Vicky Payne.

Insight Cup: *ITN News* for their footage of the unfinished chocolate pudding in Joyce McKinney's abandoned refrigerator.

Prudential Assurance Vase: *Havoc* (ATV).

Mandy Rice-Davies Award: Angela Rippon on *Top Gear* (BBC-2) advising lay-by fornication to combat sleepiness on long drives.

Zatopek Prize (for endurance and gritted teeth): to all viewers of *Lillie* (LWT).

Robert Maxwell Cheek Cup (instituted after an interview a few years ago with Bob Mackenzie, who at one point mispronounced Maxwells's firm as PerGAMon; for the rest of the time Maxwell, while fielding weighty questions about his professional ethics, tirelessly mimicked the mispronunciation, thus severely discomfiting his interviewer): no award in this premier category.

Decision on the Coleman Award was helped by *Sports Review of 1978* (BBC-1), which apart from revealing that the world women's parachuting champion is British (what *are* the East Germans up to?) included a pleasant round-up of cock-ups. Its World Cup footage didn't show David's enduring '*Wonn*-nil' just before the Peruvian forward failed to score against Argentina (the match ending nil-six), but did contain two examples of the Master's work in this field. Other commentators – fallible, human – specialise in cracked chauvinism (Fred Dinenage had one of our women speed skaters 'staying at the back to work out her tactics'), quaint tact ('Duncan Goodhew, *very distinctive*' – Alan Weeks of a completely bald swimmer), over-the-topness ('But if you think of football as a work of art, there's one of the originals: Martin Peters' – Motson), and heat of the moment *lapsi linguae* (even the great Bill McLaren, during last Saturday's Barbarians v. All Blacks match, came out with, 'McKechnie – he's about to score – but he's been caught short').

Coleman alone, however, specialises in god-like predictions. 'Jane Colebrook is RIGHT OUT of this one' he announces just as our girl storms home to a bronze. Two splendid numbers were featured in *Sports Review*. During the Commonwealth Games 200 metres, David bawled, 'And Wells has run a tre-MENdous bend' at the 70-metre mark, just as the bulky Scot was reaching the sharp turn in the track (fortunately, he did run a good bend). The other fine – and in my view disconsidered – example came during Forest's breakaway Goal of the Year against Arsenal. As Peter Withe hared down the left touchline, Coleman roared, 'Gemmill's arrived all the way from the back – and Withe hasn't seen him!'; whereupon the bearded forward, using his normal footballer's peripheral vision, promptly crossed to the bald midfield dynamo (Coleman back-pedalling with a. 'He has

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now'), who stuck it in. However, despite these classics, the Coleman Award this year simply has to go to Frank Bough, for his reading of the Commonwealth hammer result, which was patriotic to the point of surrealism. British throwers had doggedly filled third to seventh places; not so for Frank. 'And that turned out to be a COMPLETELY BRITISH event – apart, of course, from the gold and silver medals.'

The year's TV adverts have been of a very high standard. Nowadays, you've probably more chance of making it to be Ken Russell (for example) by shooting a good commercial than by joining the BBC as a general trainee. The NS Award goes to the Guinness ads; beautifully shot, confidently slow, full of clever verbal and visual puns. Whoever noted that a magnification of the sound of Guinness being poured comes out like the noise of shop blinds being lowered deserves a four-figure rise. Ads in theory provide much-needed work for underemployed actors; but they're now so well budgeted that you tend to see more top actors during the commercial breaks in plays than you do in the plays themselves. A casual register, kept over the last couple of months, came up with some two dozen famous faces and voices: from André Previn (Ferguson) and Clare Francis (Blue Band margarine) to Marcel Marceau (Polaroid) and Joss Ackland (Braun razors; funny, I've always thought of Ackland as rather a bearded sort of actor). Richard Briers – or, perhaps, an imitator of the Briers voice – gets through an amazing amount of work. Top salesman, though, has to be Orson Welles, who seems to lend his port voice to anything. He's currently pushing Carlsberg lager; but I bet he'd do a Brentford Nylons screechie if they asked. The other week I even caught him while tuned to an obscure local radio station in Colorado. The old Falstaff was instructing listeners on how the first Renny-sance had brought into the world a special breed of men; whereas now, the new Renny-sance (the Welles voice suspends logic) means that men who are Big and Tall can still dress well – provided they buy their clothes at Big and Tall in downtown Alberquerque.

Finally, the year's Moral Tale from Television concerns Ronald Allison. Remember Ronald Allison? He was the cheery stringer who a few years ago, used to give half-minute football summaries from out in the sticks. He never had quite the success which people who go into TV must imagine for themselves – or else why on earth would they go into it? – but he did, as I recall, make it to something like the newsreaders' subs bench. Then he left television for the not unplummy job of press secretary down at Buckingham Palace. A few years of service there, and Allison has returned to his earlier vocation. Did they fall on the neck of the prodigal? Did they kill the fatted calf? Not quite. When I spotted him again, it took a few moments to shake myself out of the time-warp sensation: he turned up as a thirty-second soccer stringer on Brian Moore's *Mid-week Sports Special*, reporting one of the two matches ITV didn't think all that important.

Architecture

Andrew Saint

The Cylinder King

What is a boom city like? Unless the stumbling progression of our new towns amounts to the experience, living Britons have hardly beheld such a thing. To see the rampant hand of capital at work on a city they must seek out America's sunbelt – the great urban centres of modern Texas or, better still, Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta today is no raw latterday Chicago, with construction vehicles churning frantically through the mud and high-rises being run up on every block. There is one awesome hole in the downtown area where the interchange of a brand new metro system is taking shape, and there are the swathes of barren land that so commonly encircle the business districts of America. Yet after a score of sunny years that have transformed the city into the hub of the 'new south', much of the centre has an air of cohesion and serenity. In the uptown section conference visitors, lured by Atlanta's accessibility and swish hotels, stroll peaceably down Peachtree Street alongside smartly dressed office workers, seemingly free from the potent fears of insecurity, real or imagined, that of late have plagued the American inner city.

Uptown Atlanta's *réclame* is principally due to one man, John Portman, unquestionably the smartest operator in capitalistic architecture today and, at 54, both millionaire and legend in his home city. Portman long ago acquired the powers which other American architects now aspire to (and which their national institute has but recently legitimised), those of design coupled with development. Twenty years back, impatient of the obstacles that the conventional architectural system imposed on his ambitions, he began to play the property game (now almost a hobby in Atlanta, where every second citizen seems to be a realtor on the side). The Atlanta Merchandise Mart, started in 1961 on Peachtree Street, was his first big earner and became the kernel of a vast Peachtree Center for which Portman, to use a favourite phrase, remains 'master co-ordinator'. It showed a shrewd eye for Atlanta's possibilities as a wholesaling centre but hardly raised architectural expectations.

Then came Portman's breakthrough, the Hyatt Regency Hotel just across Peachtree Street (1967). This flamboyant design jettisoned old concepts of the downtown hotel by opening up the inside into a huge covered public space, here a sensational 24-storey atrium overlooked all round by tiers of balconies and interrupted only by the vertical service core, upon the sides of which glassed-in lifts studded with fairground lights glide swiftly up to a rooftop restaurant. The Hyatt Regency might have been Portman's Waterloo. Appalling problems over fire codes had to be solved, and a conservative hotel industry initially disdained the building. Conrad Hilton having refused to take it up, it was eventually leased late on to the Hyatt Corporation, which hitherto had avoided downtown hotels. From its opening it has been a riproaring success, frequently full to the brim. Portman put a cylindrical extension on the side in 1971, the first of several towers built in the round and faced with reflecting glass that have earned him the title of the 'cylinder king'.

In little time since then, a bevy of spectacular Portman developments has arisen, among them hotels in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco all endowed with open atria, and a trade mart in Brussels (another planned near Heathrow was canned when the GLC proved sticky). In Atlanta there is a set of office blocks in the heart of the Peachtree Center, broken into thin waferlike segments in the manner of the old skyscrapers at New York's Rockefeller Center, and yet another hotel, the Peachtree Plaza (1967), a lofty cylinder of 70 stories that shoots up from another luxuriant lobby to command the city skyline. A third hotel, stubbier but again in essence cylindrical, is now in the offing, and with it Portman hopes to entice some major retailing outlet (perhaps Rich's, Atlanta's premier department store) to crown the success of the Peachtree Center.

Wholly or in part, Portman controls most of these projects. The largest he conceives not just as massive speculations but as attempts at revitalising the American downtown. At the heart of every plan is a major building enveloping some grand internal space, simple in detail but audaciously scaled and shaped, and splashed with colour by means of sculptures, trees and plants. In these secure but discreetly policed public spaces people love to mill around, communing, admiring – and so confirming the Portman recipe.

To Portman himself, a self-confessed populist, this is meat and drink. Having achieved his first ambitions, he is beginning to cast himself as something of a sage, to whom environmentalists may look as the saviour of the inner city. Basically, his solution is: more Portman. According to his philosophy, a single architect has to co-ordinate the assembly, financing and designing of large parcels of downtown property in order to entice the middle classes back and make them feel safe. His sense of responsibility is sincere (he has little time for purely aesthetic architects like Philip Johnson) and to a great extent practical; the open space and balconies of the Hyatt Regency derive not from fancy preconceptions about community but from Portman's Antoine Graves Home, a handsome block of flats in Atlanta for elderly blacks which the inhabitants avowedly enjoy. But for all his zeal over the humane renewal of the inner city, Portman's individualistic distrust of planning controls ultimately makes his wider ideas disappointing. That the concentration and cleverness his projects achieve could rarely be equalled by others less deriven, or less skilled at matching design to development, hardly occurs to him. Nor does he acknowledge that the process of amassing sites through property deals leads to bitty, haphazard sitings, even at the Peachtree Center. So long as his buildings attract custom back to the inner city Portman seems unconcerned with any wider effects, as for instance that the pull of his 'uptown' developments has distinctly weakened old downtown Atlanta. Like nearly all property speculations, his projects benefit chiefly the

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rich, and his thinking on social mixing seems equally delusory.

Yet Portman's genius for getting things done and done effectively is remarkable. Others in Atlanta who have tried to emulate him have built themselves financial headaches, notably the Omni International (designed by Thompson, Ventulett and Stainback), an elaborate complex of hotel, sports arena, congress centre, shopping mall and entertainment pavilion, with a stunning internal space of vast proportions which cheekily out-Portmans Portman. For the maestro himself, the great test upon which he has staked his reputation is not Atlanta but Detroit, hitherto one of the nation's grimmest downtowns, where with Henry Ford II's backing he has designed on enormous riverside development, the Renaissance Center. The first phase is now complete, the second under way, so it is early to judge; but its scale and impact upon Detroit are such that it will rank, whether in success or failure, among the great urban experiments of the century.

Portman apart, Atlanta is packed with brash new buildings but it has little of the past, especially in the centre. Sherman made short work of the city in 1865, and the boomsters have since completed the pillage. Pevsner on a pilgrimage likened the Atlanta Victorian Society to a 'sheepdog with no flock to guard'. One superb relic of the past, albeit again recent, does still survive in the downtown after last-minute reprieve from the wreckers. That is the Fox Theater (1929), a Moorish fantasy on a monstrous scale where you can still smooch in the dim-lit Egyptian room, watch movies in 3D, hum along to the mighty Mohler organ, or just lean back and watch the 'stars' twinkle in the dark blue 'sky' overhead. Portman himself, no great friend to old buildings, brightens at talk of the Fox and claims a part in saving it, having frequented it as a student at Georgia Tech. His interest is just, for his public spaces have given new life to the fantastic tradition of the Fox and helped restore popular enjoyment of architecture from canting catchphrase to reality.

Art

John Spurling

Full of State

Sir Peter Lely *National Portrait Gallery at 15 Carlton House Terrace*
Gainsborough and Reynolds *British Museum*

Nobody except Pepys makes great claims for Lely. Even Sir Oliver Millar, who has chosen and catalogued the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition, damns him with such faint praise as that 'he was a much better painter than the other professional court painters of the day' and that 'his principal achievement in the history of British painting was to develop the methods which had first been devised by Van Dyck ... to deal with a large practice'. In other words, Lely tended to do the face and from time to time evolved new designs and changes in technique, while assistants, using a repertory of patterns, filled in the drapery, hands, background, landscape and other details. Apparently Lely made no great claims for himself. 'For God's sake, Sir Peter,' a friend is supposed to have said, 'how came you to have so great a reputation? You know that I know you are no painter.' To which he replied, 'My Lord, I know I am not, but I am the best you have.'

In the double portrait of himself and his architect friend Hugh May, one seems to see him saying it. The young Dutchman (born Pieter van der Faes) came over to England in the last years of Charles I's reign and made good with the right set of noblemen – those who disliked Laudianism and remained in London during the Civil War; he then became the Restoration's substitute for Van Dyck, and is now, in his late fifties, Charles II's personal friend and, in Pepys's words, 'a mighty proud man' and 'full of state'. Holding swathes of silk drapery across his ample middle with the left hand, the right crooked elegantly against his hip, his face pouchy and florid, his nose fleshy, heavy bags under his eyes, Lely looks more the debauched duke than the hard-working artist. Yet although he had once taken Pepys into his house to see not only his pictures but also 'in what pomp his table was laid for himself to go to dinner', Lely was no idle Restoration rake. He worked from nine till four every day, and in order to fit in Sir W. Penn for a sitting 'six days hence' had to ask him to come 'between seven and eight in the morning'. 'There is hardly a family mansion in England,' says the *DNB*, 'which does not possess some portrait bearing Lely's name.' He himself died in possession of three houses and an outstanding collection of Old Master drawings.

Perhaps he sacrificed art to success? The exhibition does not bear this out. The early portraits, though they are plainer in costume, less artfully posed and set against blank backgrounds, are neither more nor less sensitive to their sitters' characters than the later ones. From first to last Lely remains an unsatisfactory painter of the face. Charm he can give you in plenty, especially from a distance, but try to interrogate his faces as you can Van Dyck's or the English miniaturist Samuel Cooper's and you find them insubstantial and evasive, types rather than individuals. The early figure compositions with landscape settings – the demure *Concert* and the erotic *Sleeping Nymphs by a Fountain* – are delightful but rather awkward. The later compositions with more than one sitter are if anything even more awkward and the settings – whether done by Lely or one of his assistants – are hardly better than the backcloths in a photographer's studio. But if you go straight out of the first room, containing the more parliamentary portraits as well as the stiffly-posed double-portrait of the captive Charles I and his younger son James, into the last room where there are portraits of Charles II and of his own and others' mistresses, you cannot miss the improvement in Lely's art.

David Piper in his classic *The English Face* – now republished by the National Portrait Gallery at £4.50 to coincide with this exhibition and in time to make a splendid Christmas present – writes: 'Lely's style, that early on could catch something of a morning mystery ... is, after the Restoration, of the blatant and sonorous afternoon, immensely able, often openly vulgar.' The improvement is not so much of the parts as of the whole image. Lely's inadequately individualised people become exemplars of a society, broad, bold, richly-costumed roles in an afternoon drama turning on the sexual attraction of sophisticated women. Here are the melting Duchess of Portsmouth; the formidable Duchess of Cleveland (one of whose many portraits in different guise – the Magdalen, the Madonna, Minerva, a shepherdess – was considered by Pepys 'a most blessed picture and that that I must have a copy of'); the Countess of Oxford, at once soft and glittering, wrapped in gold with one breast bare, the ultimate Christmas present; the Junoesque Duchess of Norfolk, about to bare hers. From one corner of the room old Lely looks impassively across the competing come-hither glances of these sirens towards his entirely autograph masterpiece: the arch-fornicator himself, enthroned in Garter robes, at ease with himself and the world, his long, nimble legs itching for the dance, his face the apotheosis of sensuality, past, present and to come.

The morning after the night before, the antidote to Lely's society and the measure of his failings as a portrait-painter is to be found across ths way at the National Gallery in Reynolds's *Colonel Tarleton* and Gainsborough's *The Morning Walk*. At the British Museum there is an exhibition of both artists' drawings. Reynolds was no great draughtsman, merely an imitator of Old Masters (part of his own fine collection is also on display and includes Michelangelo's study for the Sistine Adam and Correggio's study for the Parma Eve), so that the feathery, hummocky, airy landscapes of Gainsborough put him at some disadvantage. But the large selection of mezzotints after Reynolds's portraits gives an idea of his impressive range as a portrait-painter. 'Damn him, how various he is!' said Gainsborough. Lely was lucky to live when he did.

Weekend Competition

No 2546 **Set by Anne Rundle**

Russell Davies in his Sport column recently gave us a prose guide to the England Test Team. We want you to write a sonnet using the names of the 11 players in the team (plus the twelfth man) in the first twelve lines, at a rate of one per line; the last two lines are your own. Or do the same for the England (or Scotland) soccer team. By 12 January, if you please.

Result of No 2543 **Set by A. Boteman**

We asked you to rework any major poem in English into the form of a limerick.

Report **by Spiro Keats**

My Christmas gift to you all: the space normally occupied by my Report. High quality stuff; three Newtons apiece; think of me in my Barbadian hideaway over the holiday month.

Daffodils

I spotted some daffs by a lake,
And a right pretty picture they make;
I'll dream of those flowers,
For just hours and hours;
They're as good as those tablets I take.

HARRISON EVERARD

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The Wreck of the Deutschland

A boat-load of emigrant Huns
Including five doom-destined nuns
Came to grief on a shoal –
But since heaven's our goal,
The dead were the fortunate ones.

DAVID ANNETT

Easter 1916

There was a collection of schemers
Who swore they were going to redeem us.
I said 'No, you're not',
But now they've been shot.
The heroes! The darlings! The dreamers!

BASIL RANSOME

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood

In childhood it's easy to feel
The eternal suffusing the real,
But as the beholder
Gets steadily older
It doesn't seem such a big deal.

NIGEL ANDREW

The Waste Land

April. Bad month. Visit spa.
Play chess. Meet too-fecund mamma.
Look on undismayed
While typist gets laid.
Jug jug. Da. Damyata. Ta-ta.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Burnt Norton

In dealing with time it is found
That the future and past move around
So the present is cast
In the future and past.
It seems we are breaking new ground.

V. R. ORMEROD

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

No, listen, there's this albatross,
I shot him, he wasn't half cross,
He had the crew cursed, he
Made us feel thirsty,
I'm ancient now – tragic, eh, boss?

BILL GREENWILL

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

When I sit in the Churchyard at Stoke
I reflect – Class is merely a joke.
Elsewhere I can pass
As good upper class,
Whereas here – I'm just one of the folk.

A. M. SAYERS

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Having rid Hamelin town of its vermin,
And been tricked by a noddy in ermine;
He lured girls and boys
With his pipe's pleasant noise –
Where they went, not a soul can determine.

TED THOMPSON

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

An angst-ridden amorist, Fred,
Saw sartorial changes ahead.
His mind kept on ringing
With fishy girls singing.
Soft fruit also filled him with dread.

J. WALKER

Tony Miles

Chess

No 113 **English Collapse at Buenos Aires**

The English performance at Buenos Aires fell very much into two halves. In the early rounds we scored competent victories but then came the fateful sixth round. We were paired against the gold-medallists from Haifa, the USA. With an hour of the first session to play a 3-1 win looked likely. I had already drawn, Stean had a completely won position with his opponent in dire time trouble, and Keene and Mestel both had good positions. Even ten minutes from the end everything looked fine, but then in rapid succession Stean's position slipped, Mestel's collapsed and Keene put a rook en prise. Although Stean managed to win in the second session the team never recovered, and in the remaining eight rounds we lost a further four matches to finish 12th, though still only 3½ points away from the medals.

By far the most memorable feature of the event was the organisation. We arrived to learn that the chief organiser had just been 'kidnapped'. It later transpired that this was the one and only sensible thing he had arranged during the whole tournament. The choice of venue was inspired. The 'playing hall' was a badly ventilated corridor inside the River Plate football stadium (matches once clashed!). The stadium also happened to be near the airport, on the main flight path, and immediately opposite a shooting club (matches often clashed!).

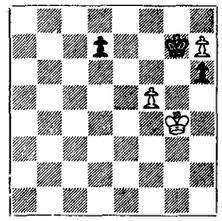
The playing schedule was similarly thoughtful. Main sessions were from 4-9 p.m. The hotel was half-an-hour's drive away. The speed of service at dinner meant that one might finish by 11.30; then the adjourned position to analyse; with luck one might get to bed by 1 o'clock. The adjournments were played at 8.30 the next morning. Allowing for breakfast and the drive back, this just about left time for six hours sleep – and then another game in the afternoon!

White: A J Miles **Black: B Spassky**

1.P-Q4, N-KB3; 2.N-KB3, P-QN3; 3.P-B4, P-K3; 4.B-B4! B-N2; 5.P-K3, B-K2; 6.P-KR3, 0-0; 7.N-B3, P-Q4; 8.PxP, PxP; 9.B-Q3, P-B4; 10.0-0, N-B3; 11.N-K5, P-QR3; 12.Q-B3, R-K1; 13.QR-Q1, PxP; 14.NxN, BxN; 15.PxP, P-QN4; 16.P-R3, N-K5; 17.B-N1, Q-N3; 18.KR-K1, NxN; 19.QxN, P-N5; 20.Q-N3, PxP; 21.PxP, B-R5; 22.R-QB1, Q-N7? 23.BxPch! KxB; 24.RxB, RxR; 25.Q-R4ch, K-N1; 26.QxR, QxQP; 27.B-K5! Q-N3; 28.Q-N5! Q-R3; 29.QxQ, PxQ; 30.R-B3, K-B1; 31.R-B5, R-Q1; 32.B-B6, R-Q3; 33.R-B8ch, B-K1; 34.B-Q4, R-K3; 35.R-Q8, K-N1; 36.RxP, R-K8ch; 37.K-R2, R-Q8; 38.R-Q8, K-R2; 39.P-N4, R-Q6; 40.P-B4, P-KR4; 41.P-B5 Resigns.

Problem 113

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 10 January.

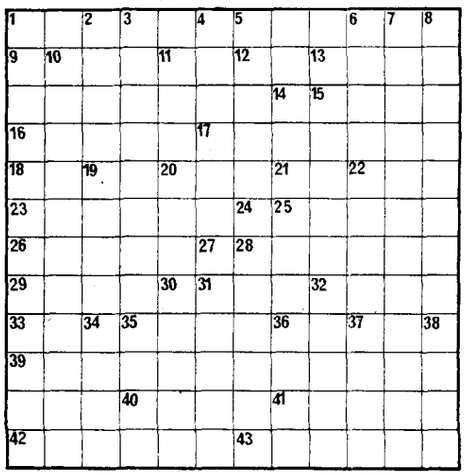


Solution to Problem 111

1 . . .P-B5 is a ridiculous move (1 . . .P-Q5 draws at once) which, remarkably, fails to lose the game: 2.K-K2, K-K3; 3.K-Q3, K-Q2! (. . .K-Q3 and K-K4 are inferior) 4.K-Q4, K-Q3; 5.P-B3, PxP; 6.KxP, K-B4; 7.K-Q3, K-N5; 8.K-Q4, KxP; 9.KxP, K-N5! 10.K-K5, K-B4; 11.KxP, K-Q5! 12.K-N5, K-K4! and White cannot win. Further analysis later.

Salamanca 13: 'When All The Candles Go Out'

PRIZES. Book tokens of £5 for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 13, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 9 January.



Bar-lines are not included as answers are symmetrical and lengths are given. On completion of the diagram solvers are asked to treat *i*s as if candles and snuff them (black them out) to produce the desired seasonal effect.

ACROSS

1 Goddess unique in aura? (6)
5 Raised part at foot of stair (6)
9 Some holly for the young man (5)
12 A coin most pinch (3)
15 A letter, one biblical one? (4)
16 If shaken, idols are not! (5)
17 One making rorts i.e.? (7)
18 Foreign youngster with a name (7)
21 A fertiliser can turned over (5)
23 Strong yew's decorated outside old tavern (6)
24 Small rope in gear that's shipshape (6)
26 A girl to break up over, by the way (6)
28 Individual acceptable with Roman backing (6)
29 Old coins, not soft in threes? (5)
31 This star (becoming herald) lies to East perhaps? (7)
33 Repeating what the Magi were possibly lacking in? (7)
36 Page, very eager to follow, told not to be so (v.4)? (5)
39 Shortly shell one nut (4)
40 Old joke perhaps found in a cracker? (3)
41 US County unit messing with one (5)
42 Might Adam have cried out about pests thus? (6)
43 Brownie's name for hut (6)

DOWN

1 Treats – or tricks (if starting right) (4)
2 Money put up for some cover? (4)
3 Nothing *can* come of nothing, hey? (5)
4 A flowery branch for an old bird (6)
5 Lay on (Macduff?) (6)
6 Almost run up? Wrong! (4)
7 He believes in non-essential worship, lax in street, perhaps? (11)
8 Lighthouse just dry, say? (5)
10 Ban on brewing any British potion not nasty? (11)
11 Good Lord! Pistol's raised! (3)
13 Some embellishment of arms (3)
14 Female influence, Scots one (3)
19 Some miniature protuberances (4)
20 Sheep running up and down (3)
22 Monkey, note, on tree (4)
25 One time colonist (3)
27 Yearns to change, no longer denies this (6)
28 Once burning out sin? (6)
29 Crikey! Headless, this matures (5)
30 Not quite before-mentioned monkey (3)
32 Pleasure in toil, so is one toiling? (5)
34 Lamb, one in lea gambolling (4)
35 Ian's scratch, once scratched, say? (3)
36 One in uprising? More! (3)
37 Six Poles drink these (4)
38 One in dingy canto (4)

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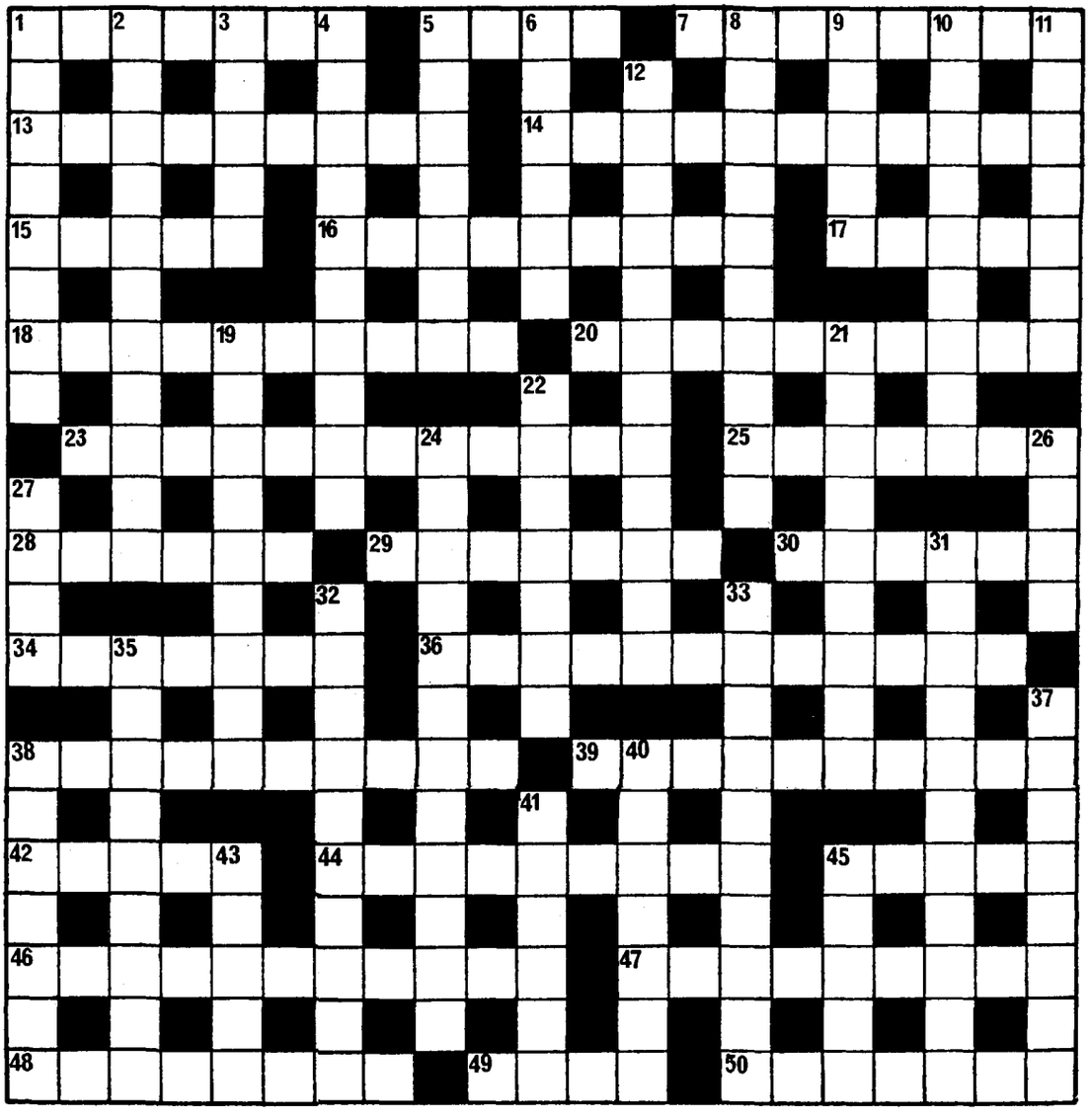

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD 1287

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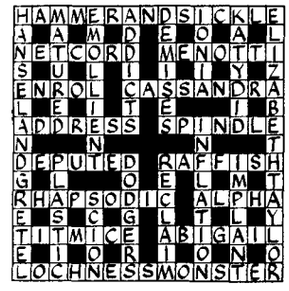
Solution to No 1285



Prizewinners to No 1285

R. Baddeley (London SE22)
M. C. Marks (Melbourne)
T. J. Meaney (Solihull)

ACROSS

1. See 35 down.
5. What there is to eat which makes people refined (4).
7. & 30. Member present? (8, 6).
13. Fellow-citizen who makes the hour begin badly (9).
14. Book without the money, although it is inconvenient (11).
15. Loud music provided where the shopping was done (5).
16. See 45 down.
17. Girl who is the opposite of something helpful (5).
18. Concerning deference (10).
20. A pastry, this is produced in France without miracles being involved (5, 5).
23. Northerner, or could he come from Perugia? (12).
25. Authorise the breaking of silence (7).
28. American certainly about to be brought back in darkness (6).
29. Nearest point in a cupboard (7).
30. See 7 across.
34. Forwards before time what may be a Christmas present (7).
36. Strange reaction in twice showing the result of burning (12).
38. Kind of mark which indicates a recent change in a boy (10).
39. Memoranda about an article in unpopular books (10).
42. In a close race he does not come first (5).
44. Exercised in reading through and through (9).
45. 'I ——— my life and being from men of royal siege' *(Othello)* (5).
46. Supporting Russia, so funny about the United Nations being in obscurity (11).
47. Study a bottle around six, being full of festive spirit (9).
48. Encouragements for layers (8).
49. The heights of experimental psychology (4).
50. Modesty makes one throw off one's cape (7).

DOWN

1. Ship could provide one with a small following in opera (8).
2. Nothing in the broken pieces paid for the lantern (11).
3. Characteristic spririt of eastern saint (5).
4. 'A being breathing ——— breath' (Wordsworth) (10).
5. Place which takes me on a journey north (7).
6. The idea of an object going up in time (6).
8. The wrong tale can be right when used by the Jews (10).
9. 'A pagan suckled in a ——— outworn' (Wordsworth) (5).
10. Separation means nearly all of the language is taken in by one quickly (9).
11. Unusual danger point in a weapon (7).
12. The thorns made no difference for Jesus and Mary (6, 3, 3).
19. Followers who make the eastern nature go wild (9).
21. Church worker for whom little credit exists in the devil (9).
22. Analyse god worshippers (7).
24. Market where there are posters over the entrance (12).
26. Nobleman engaged in the yearly Xmas celebrations (4).
27. Not the right fibre for Mrs Thatcher? (4).
31. Free competition for a plant (11).
32. Part of England which provided us with walking (4, 6).
33. Animals for people like Hamlet? (5, 5).
35. & 1. across. A ghost of a gift? (9, 7).
37. Provides a hard surface so crawler stops (8).
38. Bird which may be put in place (7).
40. The naked female comes up with such abandon, but these men aren't interested (7).
41. Christmas present which is right in the wrong place (6).
43. It would be utterly defeated if five hundred were added to the course (5).
45. & 16. across. Marry the good if turning out to be a benefactress (5, 9).

SETSQUARE

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ANSWERS

ABC

1: Extra pound
2: Agatha Christie
3: Crispin Aubrey, John Berry, Duncan Campbell
4: Dorothy Parker of Tallulah Bankhead
5: The Jackson Five
6: J. K. Stephen of Wordsworth
7: T. S. Eliot, 'A Cooking Egg'

Seventy Eight

a: Henry V (viscera only)
b: Viktor Korchnoi
c: John Ehrlichman
d: Donald Duck
e: Nikolaus Pevsner
f: S. J. Perelman
g: Ally MacLeod
h: Q. D. Leavis
i: Iris Murdoch
j: Francis King
k: Tom Stoppard, *Night and Day*

History

1a: Wordsworth
b: Goya
c: Tchaikovsky
d: Hugo
e: Gore Vidal
f: Mauricio Kagel
g: Bertolucci
h: Shostakovich (Symphony No 11)
i: Solzhenitsyn
j: Yeats
k: Dos Passos
l: Auden
m: Richard Stern
n: Orwell
o: Anthony Burgess
p: Stanley Kubrick

2a: Rider Haggard
b: Zamyatin
c: Kipling
d: Peter Brook (with Adrian Mitchell and Richard Peaselee)

3a: Jean-Luc Godard
b: Robert Altman
c: Bob Shaw
d: McKinlay Kantor

Geography

a: Actress (wife of Charles Bronson)
b: Scottish rugby union international
c: Welsh soccer international
d: 17th-century translator of Livy, Pliny, Camden, Plutarch
e: Writer of girls' stories
f: Belly-dancer
g: Pre-war film actress
h: Journalist
i: William IV's actress
j: Editor of the *Daily Mail*
k: Film critic of the *Observer*
l: English composer

Side by Side

1a: Julian Gloag, *Our Mother's House*
b: Ian McEwan, *The Cement Garden*
2a: Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim*
b: Martin Amis, *The Rachel Papers*
3a: W. S. Landor, of himself
b: Max Beerbohm, epitaph written for G. B. Shaw
4a: Henry Reed, after Eliot
b: J. K. Stephen, after Houseman
c: Louis Simpson, 'Squeal', after Allen Ginsberg, 'Howl'
d: Ezra Pound, after Anon (*c*1250)
5a: Ford Madox Brown; Peter Porter
b: Poussin; Anthony Powell
c: Edward Bulwer-Lytton; Wagner; Holman Hunt
d: Hogarth
e: Elizabeth Taylor
f: Studs Terkel

Lucky Pleaders

a: Tommy Docherty libel case
b: Pam Ayres v. Dan McNabb
c: R. *v.* Thorpe (James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room)*
d: Ted Macdougall (Bournemouth F.C. v. Manchester United F.C.)
e: *Newsweek*
f: *Morning Star (v. Daily Star)*

Near Enough

1a: Editor of the *Listener*; American actor
b: Highbrow American novelist; lowbrow American novelist
c: British thriller writer; American thriller writer
d: American thriller writer; a different American thriller writer (and creator of Travis McGee)
e: Oxford Professor of Poetry; late leader of People's Temple cult.
f: English novelist; English Cricket commentator

Puzzled

a: L. C. Knights
b: Kingsley Amis
c: Norman Mailer
d: Rex Warner
e: Malcolm Bradbury
f: Graham Greene
g: Browning
h: Anthony Powell
i: Edmund Wilson
j: Edward Albee
k: Alan Bennett

Ending Up

a: Maurice Richardson
b: Joe Davis
c: Hugh MacDiarmid
d: Nicholas Bentley
e: Duncan Grant
f: Norman Rockwell
g: Claude François
h: Keith Moon
i: Victor Sylvester
j: Doris Waters
k: Gene Tunney
l: Wilfred Pickles
m: Willy Messerschmitt
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NEW STATESMAN

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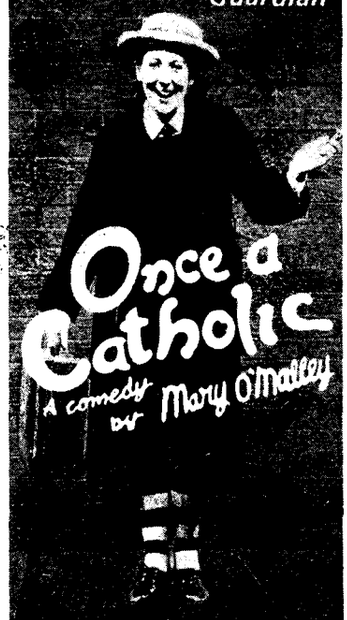

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ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Info 836 5332. Bronson Howard's comedy 'Saratoga' in rep. With Middleton & Rowley's 'The Changeling' (see daily press for dates and times). RSC also at The Warehouse in Howard Barker's 'The Hang of the Gaol', Peter Flannery & Mick Ford's 'Kids' Christmas Show and Mary O'Malley's 'Look Out . . . Here Comes Trouble'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. 'Comings & Goings' by Mike Stott directed by Alan Dossor. Mons.-Fris. 8 Sats. 5 & 8. Extended to 30 Dec.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. 'The Double Dealer', 'Strife', 'Macbeth', 'The Philanderer', 'Betrayal', 'Plunder', 'Has "Washington" Legs?', 'The World Turned Upside Down' (perhaps not suitable for children). See daily press for dates & times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Mon.-Sat. 8 p.m. 'Wheelchair Willie' by Alan Brown.

Exhibition

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile WC1. 405 9836. Original lithographs and etchings by Moore, Arthur Boyd, Whiteley, Lowry, also 18 & 19 C satirical prints.

Meetings

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. A speaker from the Socialist Workers Party on a 'Socialist Future for Britain'. Wed. 3 Jan. 7.30 p.m. at 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. All welcome.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sun. 24 Dec. 8 p.m. Open Question/Answer Meeting. All welcome. ULT, 62 Queens Gardens, W2.

BUDDHISM

Activities will cease for the Christmas period 23 Dec.-1 Jan. at Arama but introductory meetings will be held on Sundays 24 & 31 December at 120 Heath St, Hampstead NW3. 4 p.m. For details of our 1979 programme contact:

BRITISH BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION
57 Farringdon Road, London EC1.
Phone 01-242 5538 (office hours)

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THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
wishes to announce its
ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETITION 1979

Its aim is to encourage new ideas and developments in the field of learning and teaching English as a medium of international communication and understanding.

ENTRIES

Entries should describe ideas and projects, as yet unpublished, which make a fresh contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning English with emphasis on the use of English as a medium of international communication and understanding.
The following areas in the field of language studies are suggested, but the list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive: ● TRAINING OF TEACHERS ● TEACHING METHODOLOGY ● IMPROVEMENTS IN LEXICOGRAPHY AND THE TEACHING OF VOCABULARY ● USE OF FILM OR VIDEO OR AUDIO MATERIALS IN TEACHING AND TRAINING ● APPROACHES TO GRAMMAR ● CORRESPONDENCE AND SELF-STUDY COURSES ● COURSES INVOLVING BROADCASTING (RADIO OR TELEVISION) ● LANGUAGE RECORDS OR TAPES ● TEXTBOOKS ● MULTI-MEDIA APPROACHES ● TEACHING MATERIALS ● TESTING TECHNIQUES.
Copyright will be retained by the candidates but those who submit entries may be offered appropriate publishing backing in order to develop their ideas.

AWARDS

There will be nineteen awards varying in amount from £50 to £500.

For further information please write to:

David Hicks, MBE, BA, MBIM, Director of Education,
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION,
Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, London W1X 8AB.

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